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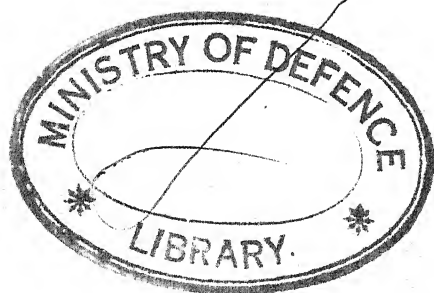
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IMPRESSIONS OF AN INDIAN CIVIL SERVANT.



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# IMPRESSIONS OF AN INDIAN CIVIL SERVANT

*By*

R. D. MACLEOD, I.C.S. (Ret'd)

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LONDON  
H. F. & G. WITHERBY LTD.  
326 HIGH HOLBORN W.C.1

55  
17920

*First printed 1938*



101  
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936

*Made in Great Britain*  
Printed for Messrs. H. E. & G. WITHERBY LTD. by SHERRATT & HUGHES  
at the St. Ann's Press, Timperley, Cheshire

TO  
MY WIFE LILIAS

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## PREFACE

THIS book is based on over twenty-three years' experience in the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh as a member of the Indian Civil Service, covering the period from 1910 to 1934. Most of that time was spent in district work, and that must be my excuse for writing this book; for it aims at describing India from what is, I believe, to English readers a novel point of view, that of the district officer, than whom, I would venture to say, no European is in a better position to become intimately acquainted with the Indian people and their doings. This book is neither a collection of personal reminiscences nor a systematic treatise, but an attempt to convey to the reader the general impressions carried away by me from India and to interpret certain subsequent events in the light of those impressions.

The spelling of Hindustani words has caused a little difficulty. I have tried to be accurate without being pedantic and have accordingly used the English spelling and ordinary print for words that have become anglicised, and a simplified form of the Hunterian spelling and italicised print for words that have not become anglicised. Thus I have written the English form 'bazaar', not the Hindustani form 'bazār', and 'kānūngo', not the Hunterian 'qānūngo'.

Another difficulty has been to decide when to use a Hindustani word instead of its English equivalent; and in this matter I have tried to avoid being either slovenly or pedantic. Europeans who have lived in India are so accustomed to using certain Hindustani words that to give their English equivalent would seem to them ridiculous. I have accepted this point of view and have, for instance, preferred to speak of a 'lātbi', rather than a 'bamboo-club'.

The meaning of Hindustani words will often be clear from the text itself, but a glossary has been appended.

Readers who desire to pronounce the Hindustani words correctly are referred to the note at the heading of the glossary.



## IMPRESSIONS OF AN INDIAN CIVIL SERVANT

It is hoped that the photographs will materially assist the reader to obtain a true appreciation of the subject of the book. They are intended not so much to illustrate particular passages in the text as to give a general idea of the conditions prevailing in an Indian district and to provide a background for the verbal picture.

For most of the photographs I am indebted to Mr. E. H. N. Gill of the United Provinces Civil Service. In spite of his arduous official duties he has spared no time or trouble in the performance of his voluntary task; and I am deeply grateful to him.

Eight photographs are printed with the kind permission of the High Commissioner for India; and a few were taken by or given to me while I was still in India.

No one except myself is in any way responsible for any views or statements included in the text.

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## CHAPTER I

### AN INDIAN DISTRICT

Introductory—The Climate—Communications—Flora and Fauna—A City—A Village

INDIA is a vast and complicated subject, and there are various ways of embarking on a study of it. We may, for instance, start either from the top or from the bottom—that is to say, our method may be either analytic or synthetic. In other words, we may either regard India primarily as an entity and then proceed to split it up into its component parts, or we may concentrate our attention first on the parts and then proceed to build them up into a whole. The method which I intend to follow in this chapter is the second, except that I shall content myself with describing a single typical part without attempting the second step of combining it with others. The kind of part to be selected for description is obvious—the district.

The district also may be regarded from two points of view by the European. He may regard it either impersonally or as it affects his own comfort and habits. At present I shall endeavour to be as impersonal as possible, reserving the second consideration for a later chapter.

But while there can be no hesitation about taking the district as the unit for examination, it is much more questionable which district should be taken as the typical one. The district that I intend to take is an ordinary one in the plains of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh. Now it would be idle to deny that a strong reason for my doing so is that it is with that province that I am most familiar. At the same time I can honestly maintain that such a district is as typical as any. For the United Provinces are representative both of Hindus and Muslims, containing, as they do, not only some of the most sacred Hindu cities but also Agra, the capital of the Moghul Emperors at the



zenith of their power; and the plains constitute by far the greater part of the area of India.

I must, however, warn my reader not to assume that every district in India resembles the one I shall describe. The climate and contour of the country, and the race and customs of the people, vary greatly from one part of India to another, and an allowance must be made for this before applying my description to any other kind of district. Yet, in spite of the weakness inherent in the method I have chosen, I am of opinion that it is the most vivid way of making one who has never been there understand what India is like.

The nearest English parallel to an Indian district is a county, and, like a county, a district is primarily an administrative unit. In this chapter, however, I do not intend to describe how a district is administered but to treat it as a convenient section of the people and country for observation. Actually what was originally an artificial division has now almost come to be regarded as a natural one; for loyalty to the same district officer, continual visits to the same headquarters, and co-operation for the same objects, have brought the people of each district together and even created something akin to local patriotism—comparable with the pride that the men of Sussex, for instance, take in their county, or the men of Kent in theirs.

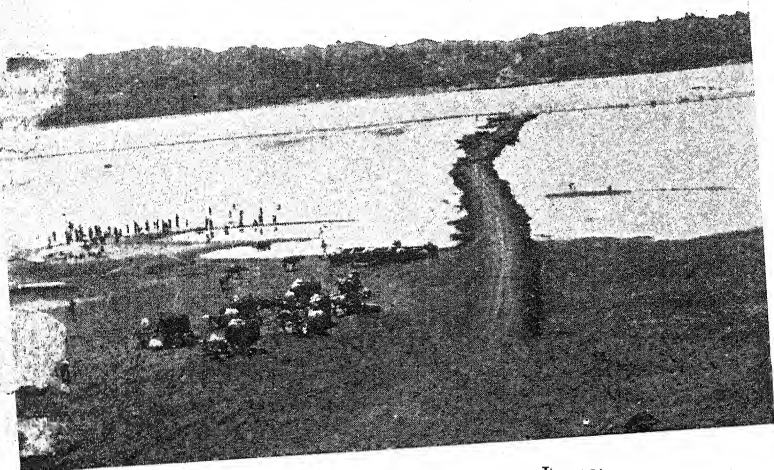
The analogy, however, must not be pressed too closely, for in many respects it does not hold good. Thus the area and population of a district in the United Provinces are both much in excess of those of an average English county<sup>1</sup>; the average area of the district being about 2,200 square miles and the average population about a million against, say, 1000 square miles and 762,000 people.

The distribution of the people in the two units is also very different. In an English county most of the population is concentrated in a few big towns, the rest of the land being sparsely occupied. In an Indian district, on the other hand, the bulk of the population live in villages: at headquarters there will usually be a 'city' with a population of some tens of thousands, and there will probably be half a dozen towns or so each with a population of several thousands, but elsewhere there are nothing but

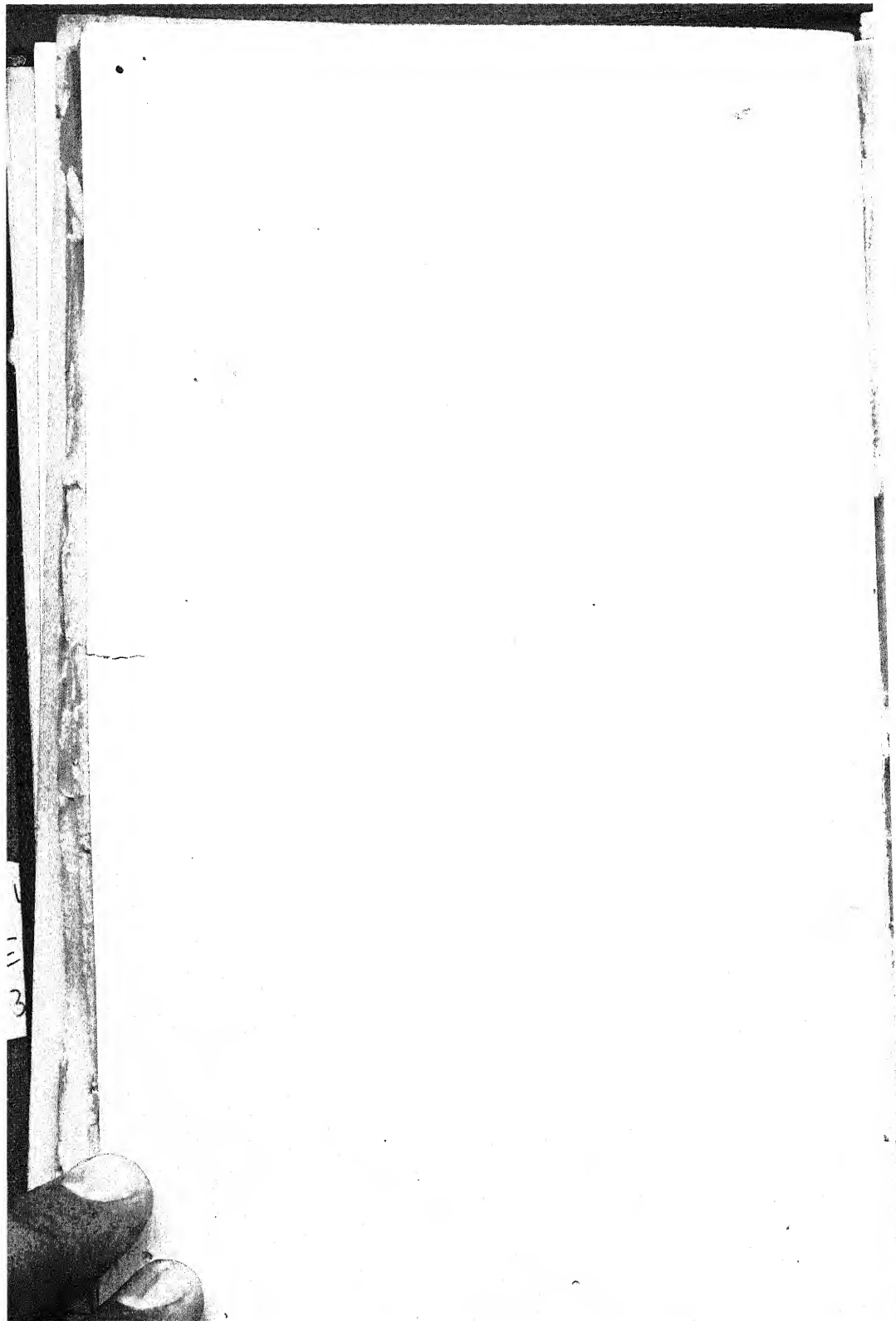
<sup>1</sup> According to the new reckoning there are forty-nine English counties.



A KACHCHA ROAD



A BRIDGE OF BOATS OVER THE JUMNA



## AN INDIAN DISTRICT

villages in most of which the population is to be numbered merely by hundreds. In India two-thirds of the working people are engaged in agriculture as contrasted with less than a twentieth in England; and in India 89 per cent of the people live in villages, while in England only a fifth do so. England, in fact, is predominantly industrial, while most of India has never passed beyond the agricultural stage.

*Climate.* But before I go any farther let me make a few remarks about the climate, otherwise the references I shall have to make to it from time to time will not be clear. It is a subject on which any European who has lived in India can wax eloquent for hours at a stretch, but for the present I will restrain myself and confine myself to a brief and strictly objective account.

There are three main seasons: the cold weather, the hot weather, and the rains. The cold weather lasts from about the beginning of November to the end of March, and consists of an almost unbroken succession of days of cloudless sunshine with the maximum temperature ranging from 70 to 90 degrees, but there is usually some light rain at the end of December or the beginning of January. From the beginning of April the temperature, starting in the 90's rises higher and higher; and during May and June it normally never falls below 100, and is often nearer 110, and sometimes higher. At the beginning of July the rains are due to break, and when this happens the temperature drops with a splash; but the monsoon is often unpunctual and sometimes fails altogether and always disappears for weeks at a time, during which the temperature rises once more, though the excessive humidity of the air remains. From the beginning of October the temperature begins definitely to fall till cold weather conditions are again established.

*Communications.* Let us return now to the cities, towns, and villages, and see how they are linked up one with another. We have to consider three 'r's'—railways, roads, and rivers.

The railways are being constantly extended, and there is now not a single district in the United Provinces that is not served by some railway or other; but, generally speaking, the function of

the railway is to connect district with district rather than one part of the district with another.

Of the metalled roads some, like the Grand Trunk Road, join far-distant places, and merely, so to speak, pass through districts, but the bulk of them are intended primarily to serve district needs and radiate from headquarters to the chief towns of the district, occasionally shooting out branches to railway stations and other places of importance.

Let me give you a picture of a typical metalled road. In the centre is an eight-foot strip of *kankar* and on each side an earthen track about six feet wide, flanked with irregular and broken rows of trees. This bit of the road I have chosen to describe first is in good condition, but, as the traffic passes, clouds of thick blinding dust rise from the untarred surface.

What a strange medley of East and West the traffic is! Private motor-cars and lorries fitted out as buses dispute the road with *ekkas*, bullock-carts, camels, and herds of cattle. They straggle anyhow across the road—for outside big cities there is no rule except for motorists.

If you go to the next milestone you will see from the inscription on it that it is eight years since the second mile was renewed. You might have guessed that without the warning, for the metalled strip, unable to withstand the sharp, rough edges of the narrow iron-bands that encircle the bullock-carts' wooden wheels, has developed such fearsome and numerous pot-holes that the traffic has deserted it for the earthen tracks. And if you go farther the process repeats itself, good stretches alternating with bad.

Another point you will notice. As the road extends mile after mile there is scarcely a bend and never a hill, so flat is the country which it traverses.

Most of the roads, however, are not metalled at all, and are hardly more than broad belts of uncultivated land between rows of fields. Where the ground is firm and when the weather is dry this is good enough, but in places the sand (or mud) lies many inches deep. Moreover, many villages lie off any kind of road at all, and can only be reached on foot or horseback along narrow boundaries between the fields.

Much the most pleasant roads, on account of their excellent



#### AN INDIAN DISTRICT

condition and freedom from dust and traffic, are those that run along the canal-banks; but these are closed to all but a privileged few.

In certain districts large rivers, such as the Ganges and the Jumna, are still used for traffic, but for the most part they are obstructions rather than waterways. During the rains the swollen waters, often a mile or so broad, are impassable except by the all too rare permanent bridges; and though during the rest of the year the stream that remains can be crossed by pontoon-bridge or barge-ferry, there is often a stretch of hundreds of yards of loose shifting sand to be ploughed through on either side.

The smaller rivers are more adequately bridged, and except during the rains are mostly fordable, but where there is no bridge the banks are often perilously steep for vehicles to negotiate.

*Flora and Fauna.* Let not my reader imagine from the title of this heading that I intend to give a systematic account of the flora and fauna of the United Provinces. That, even in the sketchiest form, would require a whole book to itself. Nor will there be anything scientific or a single Latin name. All that I shall try to do is to give a general impression of animal and plant life from a human point of view.

Let us take the best feature first—the birds.

What a fine variety India possesses—in this, at any rate, excelling England! And what sights and sounds does the thought of them conjure up!

Everywhere and at every season the birds of India make their presence felt.

Even the interior of one's house is filled with the mournful cooing of doves and pigeons perched at the top of the verandah; and every compound abounds with feathered life—with friendly minas and wagtails strutting on the lawn, with chattering seven-sisters, with tapping woodpeckers, with rollers displaying every shade of blue, with hoopoes bathing in the dust with crest erect, with scarlet cock- and yellow hen-minivets flashing in the sun, with screeching, scurrying green-parrots and with many other brilliant species.

Others are more associated with the open countryside—the

## IMPRESSIONS OF AN INDIAN CIVIL SERVANT

heron brooding on the pool at evening, the stork jabbing at tit-bits with its bill, the paddy-bird squatting intent and huddled up at the water's edge and changing from brown to white as it rises, the chocolate and blue kingfisher falling like a plumb upon the fish beneath, the curlew eternally repeating its plaintive cry, the peacock lumbering from tree to tree and calling it own name 'Mor, mor', the ungainly hornbill, the weaver-birds flitting round their hanging nests and the kites hovering aloft.

Others haunt the groves and bring up memories of camp—who that has heard them can ever forget the monotonous hammer-beats of the persistent coppersmith or the lovely liquid notes of that queen of warblers, the fantailed fly-catcher?

Others are most familiar to the sportsman—the coots taxiing like seaplanes, the terns and razor-bills circling round the *jhil*, the snipe squelching as they are flushed and jinking as they fly, the geese squawking as they pass high overhead in military wedge-like formation or dozing on a sandbank with sentinels alert, the teal whizzing through the air faster than an express train, the innumerable varieties of duck that keep so maddeningly out of range, the *sāras* uttering its harsh warning of an intruder's approach and the partridges and quail with their tell-tale whirr.

And some birds there are that bring no pleasant memories—what creature can be more loathsome than the vulture pecking at a carcass or what noise more hideous than the raucous shrieks of the brain-fever bird, growing shriller and shriller, as it proclaims the advent of the hot weather and the time when even birds will gasp with bills agape?

Truly the birds of India play a great part in the life of the countryside.

Among domestic animals the bullock and buffalo predominate, and are used to pull cart, plough, well-bucket or anything at all; while the females of the species are kept for milk. No wonder that the cow is sacred. The wonder is that the buffalo is not sacred, too. For the transport of man and goods other animals are also used. No *dhobi* is complete without his donkey to carry clothes, and sometimes master too; the camel carries goods across broken country where no bullock-cart could go; little ponies known as *tats* carry plump villagers to market and to court, while a few

## AN INDIAN DISTRICT

plutocrats maintain lordly elephants for transport in the rains, for show, or for shikar.

Indians rarely keep animals as pets. Such cats as are of domestic descent are so neglected that they have to hunt for their own food and literally run wild; and the only common kind of dog is the *pi*, packs of which attach themselves to every village. Foul creatures these dogs appear, as, half-starved and covered with disease, they search for scraps of food among the filth and garbage; and yet they deserve more pity than contempt for their obstinate refusal, in spite of all rebuffs, to renounce their claim to companionship with man.

As regards wild beasts, India does not swarm with fierce monsters as is sometimes supposed. In most districts of the United Provinces the tiger is as extinct as the dodo, and even a panther is a rare phenomenon. The wild boar, too, though ferocious enough when brought to bay, confines its attacks to crops if left alone, and is only common where ravines or forests provide hiding-places for the hours of light. Wolves too are rarely found in most districts, and though they occasionally carry off babies, are usually content with cattle; and wild cats, though savageness itself, do not attack man unless provoked.

But while wild beasts afford little danger to men's lives, they inflict much damage on their crops. In addition to wild boar, the chief offenders in this respect are *nîlgai* as large as horses, monkeys that trade on their reputation among Hindus for sanctity, black buck and sometimes porcupine; while the gathered grain is raided by the elusive rat and the ubiquitous little grey squirrel.

On the other hand there are also friends of man, such as the nimble and fearless slayer of snakes, the mongoose; and neutrals too such as the fox that, unlike its English cousin, neither stalks the domestic fowl nor in its turn is hunted by man; and the jackal, that makes night hideous with its yells but plays a useful part as one of the many natural scavengers of the East.

Reptiles next call for attention: two kinds in particular, snakes and crocodiles.

Snakes abound in India, and are especially in evidence during the rains when they emerge from the ground after their hot-weather sleep. There are many kinds—some poisonous, some not.



The most common kind in the United Provinces is the *dhāman* or rat-snake, which, though non-poisonous, is rather terrifying with its length of eight feet or so. Of the poisonous snakes the most common are the cobra and *karait*. The cobra is usually four or five feet long, and is easily identified by its hood which, when angry, it expands preparatory to striking. The *karait* is shorter but equally venomous. In a way indeed it is more dangerous, for it appears to be deaf—at any rate it does not move off so promptly on the approach of man. Not that snakes are, as sometimes depicted, malicious creatures that attack any one at sight. On the contrary, snakes (like most other wild animals) attack man only in self-defence. The danger consists of treading or laying one's hand on a snake unawares; and it is disregard of this danger that costs thousands of Indians their lives each year. One other snake deserves special mention—a short, thick kind of earth-snake, reputed to have two heads. Tail and head indeed are so much alike that it is quite possible—I speak from experience—to mistake one for the other.

Crocodiles are found in all the big rivers. There are two main kinds—the long-nosed *ghariyāl*, which subsists entirely on fish, and the snub-nosed mugger which eats anything it can get. Even muggers, however, rarely attack a man. Some man-eating muggers undoubtedly there are, but, like man-eating tigers, they are usually very old ones that find it difficult to catch more active creatures. In one respect indeed muggers are benefactors of society, for when (as often happens) Hindu corpses are thrown into the river only partially cremated, the muggers, assisted by the turtles, devour the remains, and to this extent protect the water from pollution.

Allied to the crocodile but, except for its voracity, of very different habits, is the house-lizard. These creatures are a familiar sight on the walls of every house, assiduously chasing and devouring moths and flying-ants and other winged pests till, their stomachs swollen almost to bursting-point and the wings of their last victim protruding from their mouth, they can eat no more. Yet in spite of all their beneficent activities they are considered by Indians to be unlucky.

And I must just refer to frogs, though I know they are not really reptiles. In the rains they come out in their thousands and

## AN INDIAN DISTRICT

the countryside resounds with their croakings, so that you begin to realize what the Egyptians suffered from a plague of them.

About fish it is sufficient to mention the mighty mahseer, the king of the river, and the *robū* which for its palatability must be awarded the chief place in the tank.

As for insects I simply cannot speak about them impersonally, and they must await their turn till I have freed myself of my self-denying ordinance.

Leaving the animal world, let us take a glance at the flowers and trees.

The flowers will not detain us long, for in the plains there are no wild flowers worth mentioning, and few houses outside civil lines or cantonments possess gardens. Garden flowers are mostly of the kinds known in England and need no special mention, but an exception must be made in favour of two kinds which may not improperly be described as the national flowers of India—I mean the jasmine and the marigold. These are the flowers, especially the marigold, which have the honour of being formed into garlands for the adornment of distinguished guests and being scattered before the gods and goddesses.

Outside gardens the most usual places for trees are formal groves and the sides of the road. The large trees in the Indian plains are of quite different kinds from those in England—in fact I cannot think of a single large species common to both regions.

As if to make amends for the want of wild flowers, the Indian plains can boast of some fine flowering-trees, particularly the scarlet and orange 'gold mohur', the yellow laburnum-shaped *amaltās*, and the pinky-white *kachhnār*; not to mention the blazing red flower of the *dhāk*-shrubs, masses of which still retain hold of the land in places. All these choose the beginning of the hot weather to display their loveliness.

The queen of the Indian trees is the mango, which excels all others in fruit and, so important in India, shade. Other common trees are the *shisham*, with an excellent hard wood; the *nīm*, whose twigs serve the Indian as tooth-brush and tooth-powder combined and whose bitter leaves are more efficacious than camphor for keeping insects out of clothes; the sacred, hoary-looking *pīpal* whose figs, as every sportsman knows, have an irresistible attraction

for green pigeon; the less imposing but more graceful *gular*, which also bears figs; the banyan, which sends down roots from its branches; and the *mabua*, which produces liquor from its blossoms and oil from its seeds.

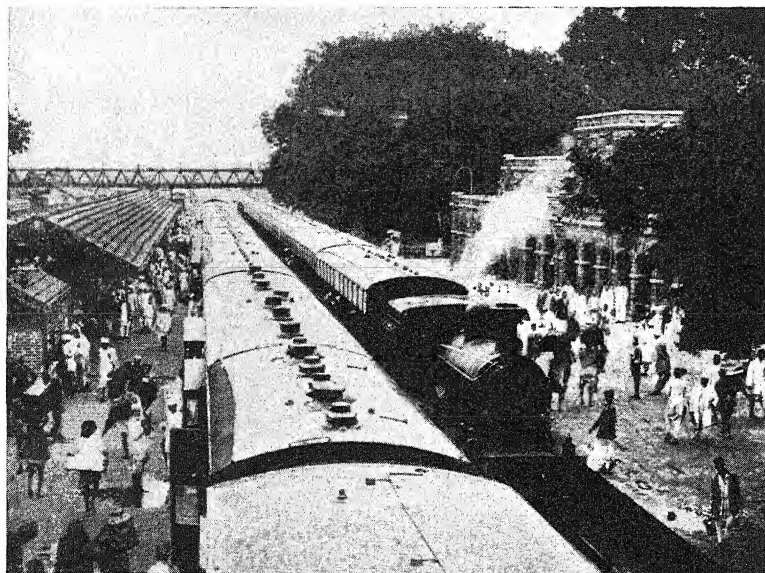
In orchards, besides some of the trees already mentioned, many kinds of fruit-trees are grown, such as the *jāmun*, the jack-fruit, the pomegranate, the custard apple, the guava, the plantain, the lime, and a bitter kind of orange; but to the produce of none of these can a high place be given.

Another common tree, though a lowly one, is the scraggy, stunted *babūl* which has at any rate the two advantages that it will grow where no other tree will and possesses a bark which is much used for tanning.

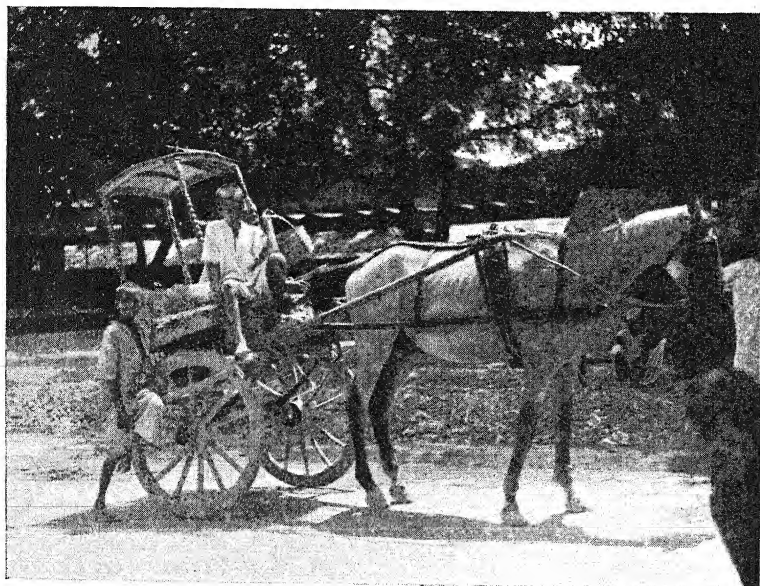
*A City.* Leaving Nature for the present, let us concentrate on man and his activities. Let us visit an Indian city first. Imagine that it is a November morning, and that we suddenly find ourselves in a bazaar, which is merely an Eastern word for a street of shops.

What confusion there is! People wandering all over the road, though no one seems in a hurry; an odd cow or so here and there, such vehicles as there are hooting or shouting their way through the crowd. Add to this flies, dust, a blazing sun, and a regular orgy of smells, and you will realize that our tour is not going to be a very comfortable one.

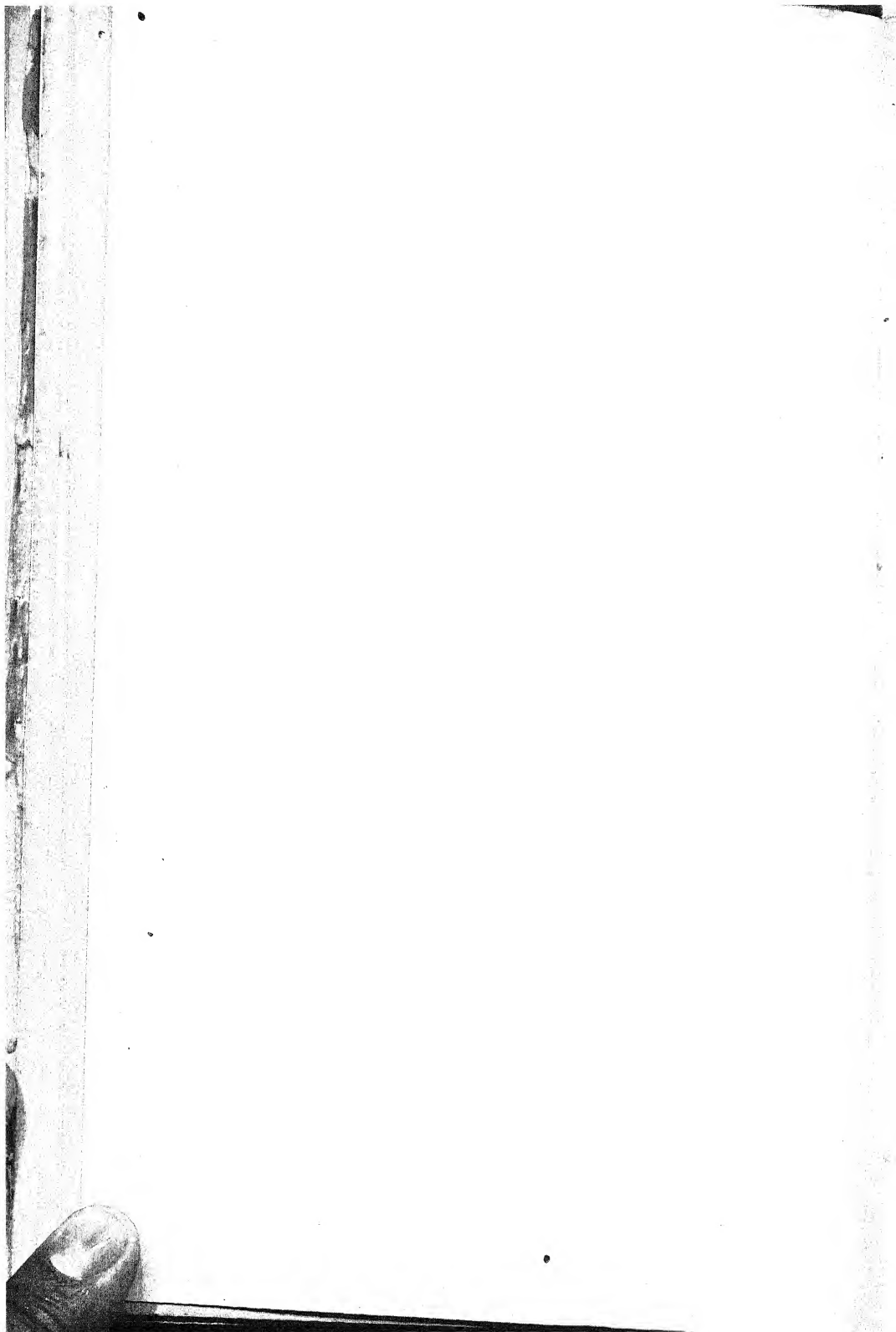
When you have recovered somewhat from the shock have a look round. First, at the people in the street. How variously they are clothed! The first man that we examine wears a turban, a long-sleeved cotton vest, a *dhori* of the same material, and a pair of clogs: the next one wears a stiff black lozenge-shaped cap, a shirt with the ends hanging out, long baggy linen trousers, and shoes with turned-up toes; a third, a Congressman, is dressed, except for his shoes, entirely in coarse home-spun cloth from his Gandhi-cap downwards. Many wear little soft cotton caps; and a good number velvet waistcoats over their shirt or vest. Some are bare-headed, some bare-chested, some bare-footed. One or two wear semi-European dress, but without collar or tie. There are not many women, but their dress is more uniform—a *sārī* over their



A RAILWAY STATION



AN EKKKA





head and half-concealing their face, a cotton bodice and a long shapeless kind of petticoat, usually dark blue and made of some heavy stuff. A drab dirty white is the prevailing colour. You look in vain for the reputed brilliance of the East.

And now let us turn our gaze towards the shops. How untidy and ramshackle they are! There is no window-dressing, because there are no windows and no dressing. To enable passers-by to see inside, the front wall is altogether missing, except when shuttered up at night; and the goods are piled in any haphazard manner. Wooden platforms, covered with sunshades of thatch or corrugated iron, project over the drains; and many of the shops overflow into the road with odds and ends placed on makeshift tables. Over most of the shops there is a second or even a third storey where the owner lives.

Now let us take a closer look at some of these shops. The first is the nearest equivalent in India to a grocer's shop. You notice that the drain in front is full of stagnant sullage-water—one smell tracked down! The owner is squatting on the floor with a long limp red-covered book in front of him, making up his accounts. Around him are spread his wares—spices, chillies, dried grapes from Afghanistan, and asafœtida—another smell explained. The next is a fancy shop with a show of cheap German and Japanese goods. A customer asks the price of an electric torch. The shop-keeper tells him, the customer offers a third of the amount, they start haggling, and are still at it when we move on. Then comes a sweetmeat-shop, the sugar *laddū* balls and the yellow sticky pancake-shaped *jalebis* almost black with flies; a ghee-shop revealing the origin of yet another smell; a brass-shop with stacks of cooking-vessels and water-pots of various shapes and sizes; a cloth-shop with piles of Japanese cloth masquerading as Indian *khaddar*; a grain-shop exuding an appetizing smell of parched gram; a shop where you can buy areca-nut wrapped in betel-leaves to chew—a habit which largely takes the place of smoking; a 'goldsmith's' shop where the owner is busy melting silver with blow-pipe and bellows; and so on indefinitely.

Beyond the shops we come to some women sitting on the ground with their vegetables laid out before them. An arrogant, gross bull with a large hump approaches and helps himself. The

victim looks as if she would like to stop him, but she doesn't. Branded on his flank you will notice a trident. That is the mark of the god, Shiva, to whom the bull has been dedicated by his previous owner. So now the bull roams where he wishes and takes what he likes, no Hindu daring to drive him off for fear of offending his divine protector.

Leaving the bazaar we make our way towards the market. The centre consists of a large open space—or at least it would be open if it were not so packed with bullocks and buffaloes and carts and drivers all standing about anyhow with no semblance of order. Most of the carts to-day we notice are laden with coarse cotton. All round the central space are rows of buildings, looking much like the shops of the bazaar but really more of the nature of warehouses, the owners of which, mostly *banyas*, buy the peasants' produce at wholesale rates. In front of most of these warehouses there stand several carts awaiting the pleasure of the warehousemen. In spite of the congestion little progress seems being made, and we soon pass on.

Now we will have a look at the houses. We turn up an alley. It is the habitat of the more well-to-do, and most of the houses are made of kiln-burned bricks and are several storeys high. But for all that it is no paradise. The road is so narrow that, except at midday, the sun's rays never reach it: the air is far from savoury; and in front of many of the houses are cesspools, full of filthy water, with the appearance of never having been cleaned for months. And how oppressively dreary the houses are, without the slightest pretension to beauty! Some, too, have ugly cracks, and seem hardly safe. Most of the houses have no glazed windows but merely openings with hinged shutters, and even these are few and mainly closed.

We make our way onwards through a maze of other tortuous alleys. In some respects they vary. Some have *kankar* roads, some are paved with bricks sloping towards or from the centre to form a drain or drains: in some the houses are mostly made of inferior sun-dried bricks; and so on. But all the alleys, though differing in degree, are beyond doubt unlovely, insanitary places.

Finally we come to a yard where members of a menial caste are settled. Here the houses are made merely of mud, with roofs

of thatch or corrugated iron. A good many have been abandoned, and no one has troubled to demolish the ruins.

I have purposely omitted to show you any of the public buildings—for at present we are not concerned with administration—but, before we say good-bye to the city, I should like to give you a glimpse of a temple and a mosque.

Here is a little temple! It is not much to look at—just a small building, about twelve feet square, with a characteristic tapering roof (reminding you a little of a spire), and surrounded by a courtyard. The priest approaches, with a caste-mark painted on his forehead and clad in an ochre robe. He is friendly and invites us in. In the courtyard you notice a plant in a pot. That is the *tulsi* or sacred basil. Over the door of the temple you see an image of what appears to be an elephant-headed, pot-bellied man sitting on a rat. That is Ganesh, the god of luck and welcome. As a special favour the priest permits us to look inside through the door, though we must on no account venture to cross the threshold—that would pollute the temple. The light is dim, but there is not much to see—only a stone idol against the farther wall. It represents Vishnu, to whom the temple is dedicated. There is not much room, but it is sufficient for the priest—the people, you see, do not meet together here to worship, they merely present their offerings and go away.

But do not run away with the belief that all temples are just like this. They vary greatly in size and shape. Some are built on a magnificent scale, though most are small, and many have a bulbous instead of a tapering roof. The images, too, vary according to the god to whom the temple is dedicated—a bull, for instance, or a phallic symbol appearing in Shiva's temples. Still what you have seen will give you a general idea of what an ordinary temple is like.

A little farther on in a Muslim ward is a small unpretentious mosque. It is crowned by characteristic domes, and at each of the front corners of the roof there rises a minaret. In front of the building is a courtyard. Luckily the priest (he is called the *imām*) is present here too, and permits us to have a look round. Like most good Muslims he wears a beard in imitation of the Prophet, but there is nothing in his appearance to declare his profession.



The building is long-shaped and occupies the whole of the farther side of the courtyard. At one side of the building is a little room where the worshippers perform their ablutions before entering the mosque itself. The *imām* is even ready to let us go inside the mosque provided that we remove our shoes, but we prefer to stay outside from where we can really see the interior well enough, for in front the mosque is entirely open towards the courtyard. Inside the most conspicuous object is the pulpit, but the *imām* points us out another interesting feature—the Western (or Mecca) wall, towards which all turn as they pray. The mosque is more commodious than the temple we saw, and here the people come to pray together, though at the Friday midday prayers which every good Muslim must attend, the congregation will overflow into the courtyard. But, as with temples, please remember that there are mosques *and* mosques.

That is all we have time to see this morning; but as we return towards Civil Lines let me tell you a little about the people who live in the city. In many ways, of course, they are the same as the villagers whom we will visit presently, but there are also marked differences. In the first place the composition of society naturally varies. In the city there are fewer agriculturists and more shopkeepers, many clerks (especially those attached to Government offices), prominent landholders who are not satisfied with village life, and many well-educated men, such as lawyers and the staff of the various high schools. And partly as a result of these different elements, and partly perhaps as a result of crowd psychology, the cityman is more sophisticated than the villager, more independent and more discontented; and it is the city that is the most fruitful soil for every sort of agitation, whether it be political or of a religious nature.

*A Village.* This time—it is still November—we are going to see what those who know their India like to call the real India: the village and the villager. For if the district is the unit of the province, the village is the unit of the district. There are two main reasons for this statement. In the first place, an Indian village is typical of the country as a whole, as nearly all the inhabitants of a village earn their living from the land, and agri-

culture is India's staple industry. And next, an Indian village is compact and isolated. How you will see when we reach the village I am going to show you.

Well, here we are! Let us leave the car on the pukka road and trek across country to that village you see a mile or so away. I dare not give its name, beyond mentioning that it begins with the abbreviated name of the founder and ends with *pūr*, which is the equivalent of the English *ton* or *ham*.

Now you see what I meant by saying that an Indian village is compact and isolated. You notice how all the houses are clustered together and that there are no other houses within a mile or so. That is mainly a relic of the days not so long ago—it was only in 1818 that the Marathas were finally overthrown—when the peaceful occupants of the countryside had to be prepared to unite against organized marauders, in much the same way as old European towns were enclosed within a protecting wall. Still even now the system has an advantage when, as sometimes happens, a gang of dacoits descend upon a village. But while the arrangement makes for security those peasants who have their fields on the outskirts of the village-land must find it very inconvenient.

As we approach the houses a chorus of barks informs us that the *pi* dogs at any rate do not welcome us. A man throws a clod of earth at one of them, and with an accuracy of aim produced by constant practice hits its lean ribs a resounding *plop*! The dog yelps and with its fellows retreats to a safer distance from which to carry on their hymn of hate.

As we thread our way between the houses, what is the first thing that strikes you? Probably the primitiveness. The tumble-down houses with their crumbling mud-walls and their crude thatched roofs, the naked children, the dirt, the dust, all combine to make you feel that here you have before you one of those places of which you have had no previous experience except from pictures or travellers' tales, and which have nothing remotely resembling them in England.

But let us examine things in detail—and let me act as guide, and add an explanation of what is not obvious to the eye.

As in the city, let us start with the people. There are not many men visible, for the able-bodied ones are mostly in their fields.

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Those whom we do see are not only more simple-looking and more simply clothed than those we saw in the city but also more respectful. They nearly all salaam us as we pass: in the city it was quite exceptional.

Now have a look at the children. See how the flies swarm around their noses and lamp-blackened eyes, and how bulging their stomachs seem! Yet they have not been overeating—their spleens have been distended by malaria. The lamp-black is to scare off the evil spirits.

We do not get much chance of scrutinizing the women, for as we meet them all draw their *sāris* closer round their face and turn towards the wall. It is not that we are staring at them too much. Their modesty would have made them shrink away, however detached had been our attitude.

As we turn one of the many bends a bullock tethered in the middle of the road—if it can be called a road—leaps back in fright at the unaccustomed sight of white men and jerks madly at its rope. We wonder how we are going to get past, when the peg comes out and the bullock dashes off, hotly pursued by its shouting master.

That is only the first of many animals we meet thus tethered—bullocks and buffaloes, goats and ponies. Nor are they the only obstructions. Fallen walls, *chabūtras*, beds, refuse-heaps—all help to make the narrow alleys still narrower. But it does not matter much, for no wheeled traffic except an occasional bullock-cart ever ventures along this way.

We have passed a good many wells. Let us stop and have a look at this one.

On the broken brick-platform round the well-mouth a woman lets down a brass pot by a rope into the water. As she does so, her toes project over the edge and pieces of dirt fall into the water. It does not seem to occur to her that the dirt will mingle with the water which she and others will drink. She might have avoided the danger by standing back from the mouth and using the one of the two pulleys which is still intact, but she prefers the more direct method. If you had come in the early morning you would have seen men bathing on the platform, and the dirty water running off their bodies into the well. Strange, is it not, that

people who have such a dread of spiritual pollution should think so little of physical contamination?

We look down the well and notice that the cylinder is made of brick too, and that this also needs repair.

Meanwhile a small crowd has collected. Let us ask them a few questions.

"What people use this well?" I ask.

"Brahmins and Thākurs," comes the reply.

"Is the water good for drinking?"

"Yes, very sweet."

"Is the water in all the wells sweet?"

"No, in some wells it's quite brackish."

"How deep is the water level?"

"About twenty cubits."

"Who built the well?"

"Lala so-and-so in memory of his father."

"How long ago?"

"Oh, ever so long ago. We can't remember."

"Where do the Bhangīs and the low-caste people get their water?"

"From a *kachcha* well outside the village."

You notice that the villagers and I do not understand each other perfectly. The fact is that we speak two different forms of that very composite language, Hindustani. I have been taught Urdu which favours Persian and Arabic words, while the villagers speak Hindi which is akin to Sanskrit and not even pure Hindi but a dialect. Moreover some of the sounds of the Hindustani alphabet are frankly beyond me. I cannot, for instance, distinguish properly between the hard and the soft *r*'s. And so our conversation has been rather a struggle.

We move on once more, and observe that on some of the house walls rude figures or symbols are painted. They are the handiwork of the women, and some perhaps are merely for ornament, but most of them are designed to ward off the evil eye—that symbol in particular which you recognize as a swastika.

A little farther on two men, squatting on a *chabūtra*, make you stop and stare. They are face to face, and one is shaving the other.

Neither shows the least self-consciousness or embarrassment at this *alfresco* toilet.

Then suddenly we come upon a sight which takes us right back to the Old Testament—a potter surrounded by his pots. As his wheel revolves he deftly shapes the clay, now into a pot, now into a saucer. The sun will bake them hard.

And that is not the only primeval occupation followed here. A little farther on a woman is spinning cotton with her wheel as her ancestors had done for centuries.

And there you see another of the world-old occupations—a man preparing a warp for the loom and stretching the yarn from one upright stick to another for a length of twenty feet or so.

And from inside that house do you hear a monotonous humming sound? That is a woman grinding the grain into flour.

By now it is almost time we went into the fields, but first let us have a peep inside a house. There is a pleasant-looking old Hindu standing in front of that largish one. He seems a little surprised at our request, but consents if we wait a minute. He shouts into the house and we hear a scampering of feet. The women are making themselves scarce.

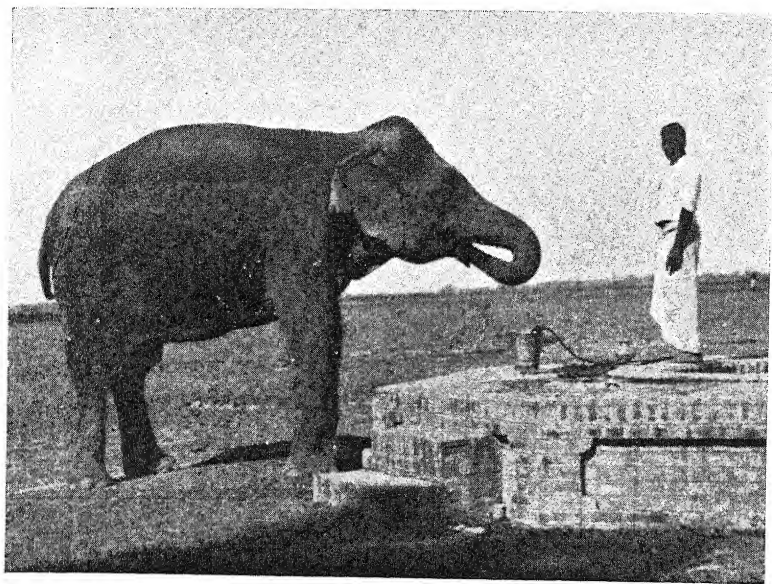
No windows are visible from outside. The house seems to have its back turned towards the road.

There is no garden, but as we pass through the door we come into a courtyard. There are a few cattle tied up here and a couple of charpoys with shabby cotton quilts thrown negligently on them. In a corner there is a three-sided erection made of earth and a foot or so high. That is the *chūlha* where the fire of sticks or cow-dung is placed for cooking.

Round the courtyard are grouped a few rooms. We look into one or two. They are dark and stuffy, and contain no furniture except grain-bins, cooking pots, charpoys, and a hurricane-lamp. In this last respect the household is lucky—many rely for light on a mere earthen lamp, in shape resembling those used in ancient Rome.

What a cheerless place to live in even now! But it must be far worse in the hot weather when the sun's fierce rays beat down upon it, or in the rains when the roof leaks and parts of the walls get washed away.

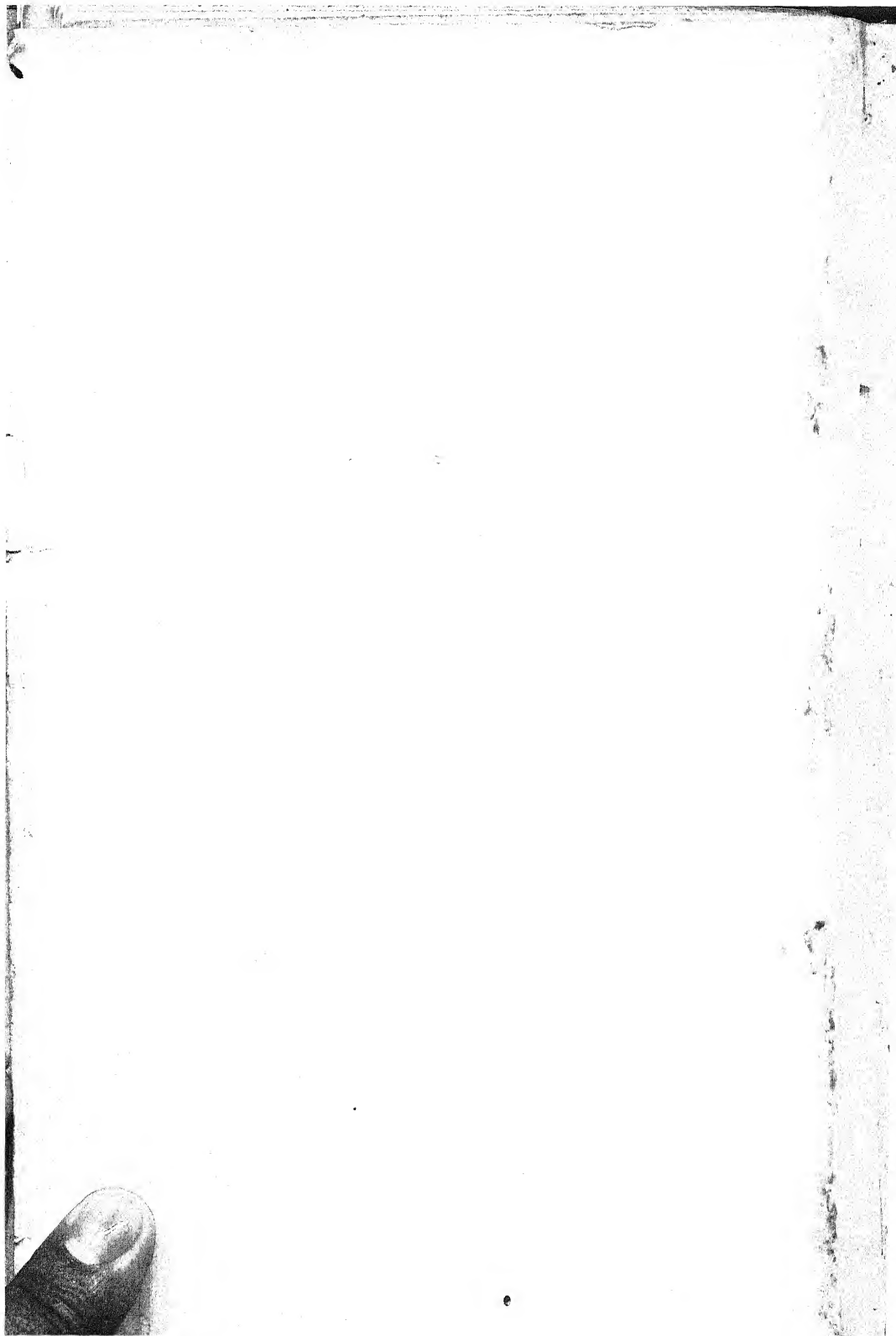




THE ELEPHANT'S REFRESHER



THE MONKEYS' SNACK OF GRAIN



Leaving the houses behind, we observe a little ahead of us a red flag hoisted on the top of a *pīpal* tree; and when we get nearer, we find under it a few carved stones stained red, some marigolds, and the clay image of an elephant. This is a shrine. The stones have been brought from the ruins of some old temple, and the red stains, the marigolds and the elephant represent offerings, the clay elephant perhaps symbolizing a real live one. The deity worshipped here is some petty godling with whom the villager can feel more intimate than with one of the greater gods.

As we are here, let us have a look at that tank close by. It is merely an excavation about a hundred yards round and twelve feet deep. It serves a double purpose. The water is drunk by the cattle, and the clay which forms the sides and bottom provides material for repairing walls or making bricks. Unfortunately it also has a harmful side, breeding mosquitoes, and thereby spreading that dread disease, malaria.

And a little beyond there is something else I must point out. You see that bulbous masonry block standing on a brick platform. That is a suttee shrine, and marks the spot where some devoted Hindu widow sacrificed herself upon her husband's funeral pyre. She now receives more honour than she ever did when alive. And now, without any further interruption, let us make our way towards those all-important fields.

But please walk warily. Remember that the village has no arrangements for sanitation. That is one of the reasons why there is such a luxuriant crop of vegetables and tobacco just round the part where the people live.

Let us first take a general view. As far as the eye can reach the land is all dead level, and arable field succeeds arable field endlessly without even a hedge to break the monotony. You look in vain for thick woods: there are only a few small mango-groves. The most conspicuous feature in the landscape consists of dense green masses of what look like giant stalks. Those are fields of sugar-cane. On the other hand many of the fields are bare, or almost so, November being the mid-season when the *kharīf* (or autumn crops) are being harvested and the *rabi* (or spring ones) being sown. For the hot sun has this advantage that it ripens



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most kinds of crops so quickly that there are two main harvests in the year.

Now let us move on and take a nearer view of some of the different sorts of fields.

Here is a sugar-cane field. The plants, though not yet ripe, are already taller than a man and so close to one another as to make it difficult to penetrate them. They do not reach maturity so soon as most kinds of Indian crops, for they have occupied the ground since the beginning of the year and will continue to do so for a few months more.

In the adjoining field a pair of bullocks are pulling a plough, preparatory to planting cane next year. You observe that except for an iron sole the plough is made all of wood. It merely scratches the surface. But do not be too scornful. Look at the lean animals. Could they pull anything heavier?

Further on we see some men breaking the ground by hand—they probably cannot afford bullocks or buffaloes—with an implement unknown to English agriculture. It looks rather like a hoe, but is being swung above the shoulder for each stroke and wielded like a pickaxe. If we regard its function it is really a kind of inverted spade—one of the many instances in which the Indian method is the reverse of the European.

Much of the profits from the cane go to the modern factory which has sprung up a few miles away, but even so the peasant of the United Provinces, thanks largely to the prohibitive tariff imposed on Java sugar, finds sugar-cane the most lucrative crop that he can grow.

Not all the sugar-cane, however, goes to the factory. Some is still crushed in the old-fashioned *kolbū*. Let us go and have a look at that one just over there. The power, as you see, is supplied by the bullock and buffalo which revolve the mill by pulling the rough pole as they go round and round; while a man squats on the ground and feeds the two geared wheels between which the cane is crushed. The juice is pouring into that earthen bowl beneath. It is a tedious process and far from thorough, but good enough for making coarse *gūr* for the grower's own consumption, and has the advantage of keeping him independent of the factory-owner and his minions.

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Returning to the fields we see a stream of water pouring into them; and if you traced it to its source you would find that it is coming from an outlet in a channel which in its turn takes off from a distributary of the canal. Indeed without such a constant supply of water as is normally assured by the canal to the fields it serves, sugar-cane can hardly be grown at all.

But not all the fields are so favoured. Only a limited number can be irrigated from the canal as the supply of water in the great river from which the canal is filled is not inexhaustible. So now let us visit a field beyond the area dependent on the canal.

Making our way along the narrow boundaries between the fields, we soon arrive at a field relying on the next best form of irrigation—a well. This is a wheat field with the plants hardly showing above the ground; and here too a stream of water is flowing, but this time it comes from a well in the corner of the field. What attracts your attention is the rather complicated method of drawing the water. A pair of bullocks are hauling a rope which passes over a wooden pulley erected over the mouth of the well. At the end of the rope is a limp leather bucket. One man is managing the bullocks and another is standing by the well and alternately emptying the bucket as it comes up and letting it down into the well again. That is all quite clear, but what perhaps you do not grasp at first is the object of the earthen ramp, sloping upwards towards the well to a height of four feet or so. You will notice that before they commence to haul the bucket the bullocks clamber up the ramp's steep side by the well and then descend gradually along the ramp's length away from the well. By the time they reach the end the bucket has come up and the bullocks now walk back to the well, not up the ramp but along the low ground beside it. Now the manœuvre is plain. The downward slope gives the bullocks' weight more power as they draw the water; and the driver, you see, adds his weight too when necessary, by sitting on the rope.

If you look down the well you will notice that it is merely a *kachcha* one—that is, just a deep hole in the ground. All the irrigation-wells, however, are not so primitive. Some are made of brick, though sometimes the bricks are not baked in a kiln but merely dried by the sun.

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Some fields, however, belonging to this village are irrigated in a different way. Here is a field in point. This too has been sown for the *rabi*, but instead of wheat it contains a mixed crop of barley, mustard, and peas. The water for the field is coming along a channel which extends to that *jbil* over a hundred yards away. The *jbil* is quite shallow, and merely the accumulation of rain in a broad clay depression.

Arrived at the edge we observe that the water-level is about four feet below the level of the surrounding fields, and that to reach this the water has to be lifted twice. To enable this to be done two steps, so to speak, have been dug in the gently sloping bank. On top of the lower step a rough reservoir has been dug out, and into this four men—two standing on each side and facing the other two—are lifting water from the *jbil* in a leaky basket which they swing by means of connecting ropes backwards and forwards with a rhythmic motion. Above them four other men repeat the process, swinging their basket, however, between the reservoir and the top of the higher step which is slightly above the level of the field to be watered. The method is an inferior one, for not only does it require much man-power, but the supply of water depends on that uncertain factor—the rainfall.

The crop that has been sown in the field we are contemplating is not so valuable as wheat, but on the other hand it needs less virtue in the soil, less manure and less water.

But before we leave the *jbil* you will notice in the distance another method of raising water. The apparatus looks rather like a monstrous fishing rod and line, with the broad end of the rod fixed between two posts and with a bucket instead of a hook dangling from the line. That is the *dhēnkli* system; and though primitive in execution, the device is quite ingenious. For the handle of the 'rod' is so weighted with a lump of earth that the minimum of human effort is required to pull up the bucket full of water.

Some fields, however, are altogether dry, without any artificial irrigation. Such fields are mostly sown for the *kharif* when the sub-soil may be expected to retain some of the moisture from the rains. Here are two adjoining fields of the kind I have in mind.

They contain two kinds of millet—the first field *jawār* and the second *bājra*. They have been reaped already, and now there are only stumps to tell the tale, but presently we will go to the neighbouring threshing-floor and you will be able to see for yourself what the plants looked like when growing.

First, however, let me point out those lines of thin dark-green plants still standing between the stumps. They are *arhar* plants, and will produce a kind of lentil, but require several months before they are ripe.

On the threshing-floor you notice great stalks six or seven feet long. Some have tops like a spear-head, they are *jawār*: some like a bulrush, they are *bājra*. The tops contain the grain: the stalks will be chopped up for fodder for the cattle.

As you watch the bullocks treading out the grain your mind goes back once more to the Old Testament. Only, in spite of the ancient prohibition, these poor beasts are muzzled.

By now we are beginning to perspire. But before we return there is just one more thing I wish to show you—that part-brown, part-white *ūsar* plain. It must be fifty acres in extent. It is quite uncultivated for the simple reason that nothing will grow on it, but a hundred animals or so—bullocks, cows, buffaloes and goats—have been brought by two small boys to graze on it. The scientists tell us that *ūsar* is a saline efflorescence caused by water-logging, but all that the half-starved animals know is that it is mighty hard to get a meal off it.

As we proceed homewards let me explain to you a few things not obvious to the naked eye.

First the ownership and tenure of the land. The systems vary greatly from province to province, and even within the United Provinces the system in Oudh differs widely from that in the Agra districts. Moreover the systems in the United Provinces, with which we are now concerned, are most elaborate and could not be explained without a long and technical description. I cannot therefore attempt here to do more than touch the fringe of the subject and give a very brief account of the general conditions as they affect the life and position of the peasant and the landlord.

Although every village contains a large number of peasants

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as distinct from mere labourers, yet very few of them own the land they cultivate. Usually the land in a village belongs to a comparatively small number of zemindars or even a single one, though sometimes the land is owned by a host of petty landlords known as *pattidars* who cultivate a great part of their land themselves. The tendency indeed is for the estates to get split up more and more, for, except in respect of certain ancient estates to which the title of Raja or Nawab appertains, there is no law of primogeniture in India either among Hindus or Muslims, and on a man's death all his sons and also other heirs inherit various shares of his property. In Hindu law indeed a family may remain joint even after the death of the original ancestor, but when disputes arise, as they often do, the usual remedy is partition.

But though few peasants own the land they cultivate, most of them in the United Provinces are now 'statutory tenants' and are practically assured of tenure for life with a few years' extension for their heirs provided they observe certain rules: and in the near future most of them are likely to be admitted to the hitherto privileged status of occupancy tenure, which includes permanent and heritable rights. On the other hand some tenants are liable to ejection at the landlord's pleasure.

For the preservation of statutory or occupancy rights, what are the rules to be observed? First and foremost, the peasant must pay his rent punctually. Next, he must not sub-let his land beyond a limited extent. And, thirdly, he must not misuse his land; in particular, he must not use agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes.

The rates of rent vary greatly, partly according to the nature of the soil (which may range from a heavy clay to a light sand), partly according to the nearness of the houses, partly according to the tenant's caste, and partly according to the landlord's temperament.

The peasant, however, is protected from excessive enhancement of his rent by Acts which regulate enhancement and prescribe the intervals which must elapse between one enhancement and the next.

Yet notwithstanding the beneficent land-system, agriculture in India cannot be said to be in a flourishing condition. At present

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this is partly due to the post-War slump in the prices of grain; but there are more permanent causes.

In spite of all the provisions for artificial irrigation the nature of the Indian harvests depends largely on the monsoon, which (as we have already seen) is most capricious. When it fails over a large area the crops, even if sown, either wither up altogether or yield merely a poor outturn.

But while drought is the peasant's chief fear, he has many other enemies, such as floods, frost, storms of hail as big as marbles, locusts, wild animals, blights, and fire on the threshing-floor; indeed he cannot be sure of his harvest till it has actually reached the market.

Moreover in one important respect the land is being constantly robbed of its fertility. For the cow-dung instead of being put back into the land as manure is burned for fuel and used to plaster floors or walls.

And there are two other matters which, though they do not directly affect the outturn of the crops, help to make agriculture uneconomic. In the first place most holdings are far too small to support the number of persons who occupy them, this in its turn being attributable to the density of the population; and secondly, there is the wasteful habit of maintaining a large number of un-serviceable cattle which diminish the already scanty supply of pasture, the Hindus refusing from religious scruples to kill off old or unfit animals.

Nor beyond the sphere of agriculture are there wanting circumstances that act adversely to the peasants' interests. For the peasants are subject to the general Indian failings of inordinate extravagance at weddings and other important family ceremonies, and wasteful expenditure on profitless litigation.

You will not, therefore, be surprised to hear that the ordinary peasant is pitifully poor, and that a very little is sufficient to submerge him beneath the level of the barest means of livelihood and sink him into debt.

The indebtedness of so many of the peasants is indeed one of India's most malignant maladies, but I will deal with that more fully in a later chapter concerning India's problems.

The Indian peasant does not enjoy the robust health which we



#### IMPRESSIONS OF AN INDIAN CIVIL SERVANT

are accustomed to associate with tillers of the soil. Generations of child-mothers, enervating heat at one time and cold severe enough to numb ill-clad bodies at another, an insufficient and unbalanced diet, neglect of the most elementary rules of hygiene, and the ravages of malaria have all combined to undermine his physique and lessen his powers of resistance against disease. Such people readily succumb to pneumonia and general debility, and fall an easy prey to the pestilences of cholera, plague, and smallpox which sweep the land year after year with relentless regularity.

Turning to another matter: what is the peasant's daily round? If he is a Hindu, he starts the morning, we are told, with prayers to the household-god and with a bath—the latter operation, however, consisting not of immersion in a tub of water but of standing by the side of a well and pouring water over his body. Then he proceeds to his fields, and at midday some member of his family brings him out some food. In the evening he returns home and partakes of his chief meal. After that he has usually nothing to do but sit outside, perhaps round a fire, and chat with his cronies. The favourite sitting-place is the *chaupāl*, which for meeting purposes takes the place of the English village-inn, and is merely an earthen platform with perhaps some rough kind of roof. The Muslim's round is much the same, but his special time for prayers is sunset. In the hot weather when agriculture is at a standstill the peasant instead of going to his fields will repair his house or do any other odd job required.

"What a dull life!" you exclaim. And you are right. Though, of course, there are special occasions. Still the Indian villager has hardly any amusements in our sense of the word, and his diversions are almost limited to religious festivals, religious recitals and family ceremonies, though among Hindus at any rate family ceremonies of a religious or semi-religious nature are very numerous.

Not, I believe, unconnected with the dullness of his life is the villager's habitual quarrelsomeness. Occasions for outbursts frequently arise. Perhaps one party of peasants breach the bank of the canal-distributary and thereby divert to their own fields water intended by the canal authorities for others, or two sets of peasants both claim possession of the same field, or cattle trespass



A BAZAAR



A RESIDENTIAL QUARTER





## AN INDIAN DISTRICT

in a field and before the owner of the field can get the cattle to the pound the owner of the cattle arrives and tries to rescue them.

Or the occasion may be more trivial. A man may tether an animal near his house on land claimed by a neighbour as his own; or even a children's squabble may lead to a fierce fight between their respective parents.

The national weapon is the *lāthī* which is a stout bamboo-stick, often tipped with brass; and a hasty blow with this on a thin skull or weak spleen may easily result in a charge of manslaughter or even murder.

Nor are these quarrels ended as quickly as they start. Few villages in fact are free from feuds, which last sometimes for generations.

And yet for all his weaknesses there is something very attractive about the Indian peasant, displaying, as he does, such patience in adversity and revealing to those who treat him properly that courtesy which so often marks the members of an ancient race. Everyone indeed who knows India has a soft place in his heart for the peasant, and, as I said at the beginning of this section, believes that it is he and not the proud raja or the mystic *sādhū* or the eloquent *vakīl* who most truly represents the real India.

So ends your first glimpse of an Indian district. If you remember what you have seen and heard, it will form a background to all that follows.

## CHAPTER II

### THE ADMINISTRATION OF AN INDIAN DISTRICT — PART I

Introductory—The District Officer as (i) Collector, (ii) District Magistrate, (iii) Head of the District

AT the beginning of the last chapter I referred to India's vastness, and at the beginning of this chapter I wish to emphasize that vastness once again. Before the separation of Burma it used to be said that the Indian Empire was as large as Europe excluding Russia. To-day we should have to exclude a further area, say the Iberian peninsula, but even so India remains huge enough with an area of 1,575,000 square miles and a population of 338,000,000.

It follows that the Government of India, as the Central Government is called, cannot cope directly with the administration of the country as a whole, but has to leave most of it to the local governments of the various provinces.

Even the provinces, however, are far too unwieldy for the personal rule so dear to the hearts of Indians—the United Provinces, for instance, being considerably larger than Great Britain. Accordingly the provinces are divided into divisions, and the divisions into districts, of which there are two-hundred-and-thirty-one in British India, excluding Burma, and forty-eight in the United Provinces.

And it is the district that may be called the unit of administration, for it is the greatest area with which, generally speaking, any one can remain in personal touch and over which any one can exercise direct control, though the district itself is again divided for facilitation of the work of the various kinds of administration.

In the previous chapter I warned my readers of the impossibility of making sweeping generalizations about the main features of a district, and I must now issue a similar caveat about its administration.

## ADMINISTRATION OF AN INDIAN DISTRICT

The remarks that follow apply primarily to the United Provinces, which may be taken as pretty typical of India as a whole, not only (as we have already seen) on general grounds, but also for the purpose of administration.

Nevertheless conditions vary considerably from province to province. In Madras, for instance, there are no divisions. In some provinces, particularly Bengal, and Bihar and Orissa, much of the land revenue has been permanently settled, and where this is so the land records are not kept in such detail as in the temporarily settled areas; and in more than a third of British India, excluding Burma, the land revenue is collected direct from the cultivators instead of an intermediary zemindar.

Nor will the description given in this chapter be true even of all districts in the United Provinces. In the hill districts, for instance, the system of administration is more primitive than in the plains.

From the previous chapter the reader will have gained some idea of what a district is, but for the sake of clearness I repeat that the average area of a district in the United Provinces is about 2,200 square miles, and the population about a million, and that the bulk of the people are engaged in agriculture.

A district contains a multitude of officers and officials—there is a subtle distinction between the two—and of these all the officials and most of the officers are Indians. Chief of the host is the district officer, who more often than not is a Britisher, though the number of Indians is being gradually increased till there is an equal number of each race.

But though the district officer is the head of the district, this does not mean that all the official hierarchy is subordinate to him. On the contrary there are many departments represented, each with its subordinate officials owing allegiance to their own chief, whether resident within or outside the district. The relation between these departments and the district officer is not well-defined, but amounts to one of co-operation, in which each department for the most part acts separately but is expected to consider the district officer's views on matters of general policy substantially affecting the welfare of the district.

Nor is limitation of the district officer's powers to be found

merely in official quarters. The district and municipal boards show a growing tendency to flaunt their independence; and the local members of the provincial legislature watch the district officer's behaviour meticulously, and on the slightest provocation are ready to bombard the Government with searching questions.

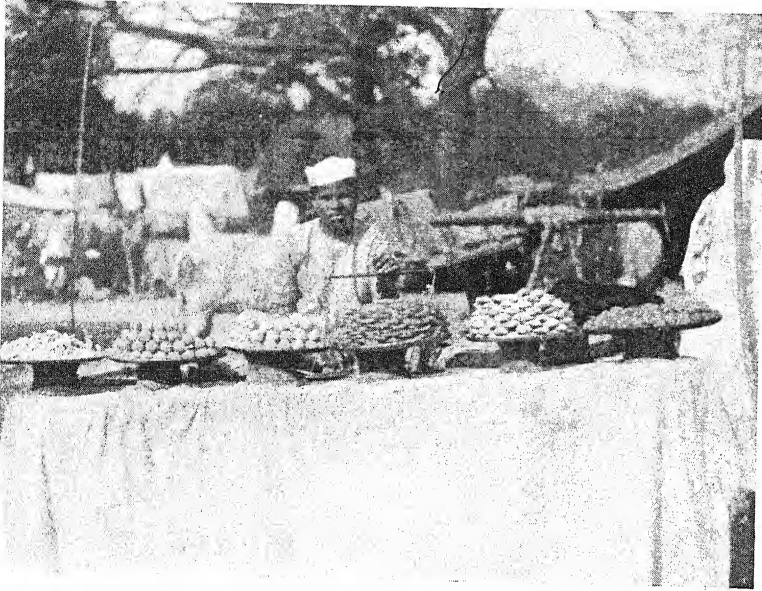
Yet, in spite of all these reservations, the district officer rules the district in a sense for which there is no parallel in modern England, and the administration still depends largely on his character and ability. So much so that an examination of his work is the obvious and easiest way of approaching a study of the administration as a whole.

Let it not be thought, however, that by adopting this method of looking at things from the district officer's point of view I intend to belittle the work of other officers. To some of them I shall have occasion to refer in my analysis of the district officer's duties, and the work of others will be described in the next chapter. And if it be thought that I give these officers and also the local bodies less than their share of mention, that must be attributed partly to my desire to keep the account within reasonable limits and partly to my special acquaintance with the district officer's work.

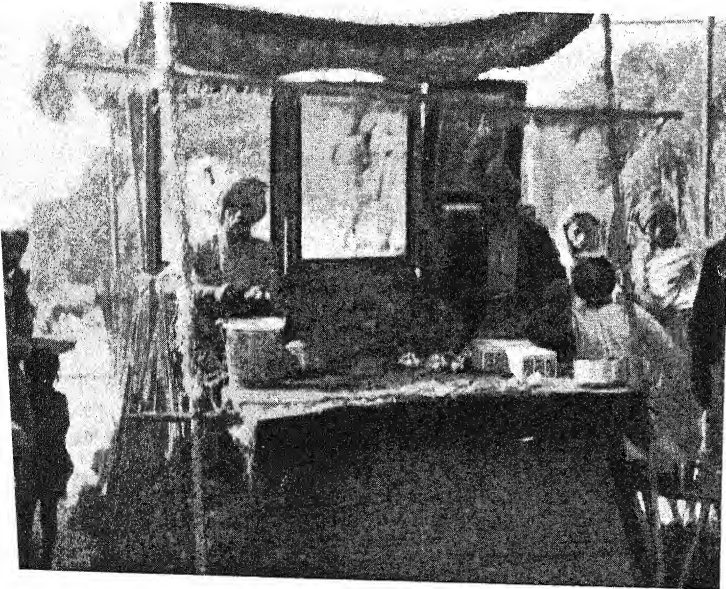
Even my description of the district officer's work will be far from complete. His duties are so numerous that to give an exhaustive account of them would leave my reader bewildered if it did not have the effect of making him shut the book; and, besides, a good many of them will appear from the inspections which I shall describe in a later chapter. So all that I shall attempt to do is to outline the main features, particularly those peculiar to India.

Perhaps the best introduction to this sketch will be a brief reference to the three classes of assistants with whom the district officer could least dispense—sub-divisional officers, *tahsildars*, and *patwāris*.

The district is divided into four or five sub-divisions in charge of sub-divisional officers—or sub-divisional magistrates, as they are alternatively called. Much they perform on their own responsibility, but in matters of special importance they are guided by the district officer. They are, so to speak, the district officer's lieutenants; and their work is in many respects analogous to his,



SWEETS AND FLIES



A BETEL SHOP





but while the district officer devotes most of his time to his executive duties, the sub-divisional officers are often overwhelmed with the burden of unending cases.

A *tahsil*, of which a *tahsildār* is in charge, is usually co-terminous with a sub-division, and the *tahsildār* ranks as subordinate to the sub-divisional officer, but for some purposes the *tahsildār* takes his orders direct from the district officer. The *tahsildār* has magisterial powers, but these are of a petty nature, and he is pre-eminently an executive officer, his principal duty being to collect the land revenue (*tahsildār* in fact being merely the Hindustani for 'collector'). Besides this principal duty, however, the *tahsildār* is expected to carry out any job that may be required of him, whether it be to organize a meeting, to spread propaganda, to collect dues, to raise subscriptions, to reconcile factions, to twist a mischief-maker's tail, or to perform any other of the countless duties which arise. The *tahsildār*, then, is the man who must get things done. The district officer and the sub-divisional officer are mainly concerned with giving orders and the *tahsildār* with carrying them out. To take a military analogy, the district officer and the sub-divisional officers may be likened to the colonel and officers, and the *tahsildār* to the sergeant-major. True to his character, the *tahsildār* resides at the headquarters of the *tahsil*, unlike the sub-divisional officer who usually resides at the headquarters of the district.

The *patwārī* is primarily responsible for preparing and maintaining the land records of his circle, which usually consists of three or four villages. Though at the very bottom of the official ladder, his work is of first-rate importance, for the entries which he makes vitally affect the interests of most of the residents of his circle, and if there is any agrarian dispute his papers generally form the most weighty evidence. But the maintenance of the land records by no means exhausts the *patwārī's* duties. He is also expected to supply many kinds of local information to the authorities and to do all sorts of odd jobs. If, for instance, frost damages the crops, or an epidemic breaks out among man or beast, he must report this to the *tahsildār*: or if a census is to be taken of the people or the cattle, or an election to be held, he will be expected to assist. He is, indeed, a kind of maid-of-all-

work, and in a sense may be regarded as the district officer's village agent: and without him administration would come almost to a standstill.

For this responsible work the *patwārī* gets from the Government only about £1 a month. But in the East a petty official's pay and income are vastly different matters: and the *patwārī* is no exception to the rule. Still it must be remembered that the unofficial takings of most *patwārīs* may be more fairly classified as perquisites than bribes, and, though undoubtedly there are black sheep ready to falsify their records for a consideration, these do not form a large proportion of the fold.

And now the way is clear for our exploration of the duties of the district officer.

The district officer has three capacities—as collector, district magistrate, and head of the district: and it will be convenient to examine his main duties under each capacity in turn.

*The District Officer as Collector.* This title represents historically the district officer's original capacity, and dates back to the time of the East India Company when India was regarded mainly as a source of income. But it is now misleading, for though the collector is responsible either immediately or ultimately for the collection of revenue of all sorts, he collects it through his subordinate officers, and that, though an important duty, is only one of many.

The chief kind of revenue to be collected is the land revenue which is paid in the United Provinces by the landlords out of the rent which they collect from their tenants. On account of this association, 'revenue' in the jargon of Indian officialdom besides its ordinary meaning has the peculiar meaning of anything connected with the ownership or holding of agricultural land: and the district officer as collector is in charge of the whole revenue administration.

Taking the word in this wide sense the collector may be said to have six main duties: (a) collection of the land revenue, (b) maintenance of the land records, (c) protection of the interests of agriculturists, (d) control of the revenue courts, (e) custody of treasury, (f) administration of excise.

*Collection of the Land Revenue.* What is land revenue? I cannot attempt to give its detailed history, but will content myself with saying that a land-tax has always been of great importance in India and has been imposed from time immemorial, and that before the British assumed the government of the country the zemindars were treated not as landlords but as contractors for realizing the tax from the peasants and paying the bulk of it to the ruler of the day. If that is not borne in mind the proportion which the land revenue bears to the rent-roll may seem unduly high. At present in the United Provinces the rate usually applied at settlements is about 40 per cent, but in the old days the share demanded by the ruler or the Government was much greater: and actually the rate in force in most districts of the United Provinces is much less than 40 per cent owing to the rise in rents since the last settlements.

Land revenue is still much the largest source of income in the district, though customs now take chief place for India as a whole.

The amount of revenue to be paid depends naturally on the rental value of the land; and for each district in turn a settlement officer is appointed every thirty or forty years to examine the assets and fix the revenue payable by each landlord annually till the next settlement.

The land revenue is collected, as a rule, in two half-yearly instalments, the first being paid by the landlords out of the *kharif* rents and the second out of the *rabi* ones.

We have already seen that the district is divided into *tahsils* for the purpose of collection, but for all that a *tahsildār's* task is a formidable one. In each *tahsil* there are hundreds of villages, some of which are owned by scores of co-sharers, a certain number of whom reside outside the *tahsildār's* jurisdiction.

To simplify the problem most villages are divided into *mabāls*, and in every *mabāl* or undivided village one landlord is appointed *lambardār*, who is responsible for the payment of the revenue of the whole *mabāl*, and, as compensation for his trouble, receives a small remuneration at the expense of the other co-sharers.

Even so, however, no one knows better than the *tahsildār* that the money will not find its way to his office if he merely sits

back in his chair. So as soon as an instalment falls due he lets loose a host of *chaprāsīs* to stir up the bad payers with writs of demand or summonses to appear before him.

When these fail to have the desired effect he resorts to severer processes, and sends out bailiffs to attach the defaulters' property—cattle, or crops, or vehicle, or even house—with the threat of sale.

Or if the *tabsildār* knows that a man can pay but will not, he may have him arrested by a *chaprāsi* and keep him locked up for fifteen days, or until he is prepared to disgorge, which is usually pretty soon.

Or in special cases the *tabsildār* may find it necessary to attach the defaulter's landed estate and collect the rents himself; and according to the law the estate may even be sold.

Let it not be thought, however, that the *tabsildār* exercises these powers tyrannically or arbitrarily. There are all sorts of safeguards, and he is precluded from having recourse to the more drastic methods without the sanction of higher authority.

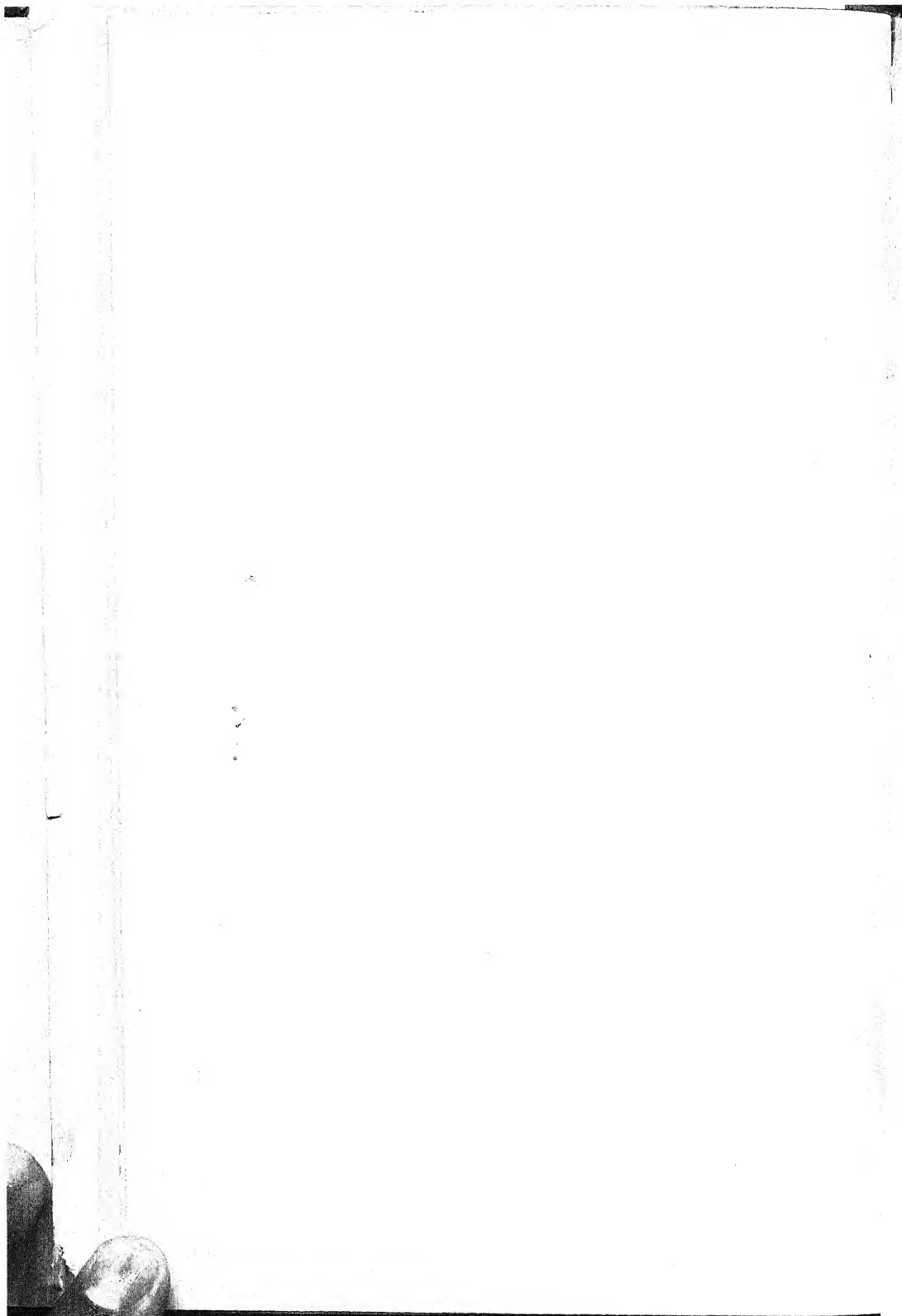
A special problem is presented by defaulters who live outside the *tabsil* where the money is due. These landlords are apt to take advantage of their immunity from most of the weapons at the *tabsildār's* command; and as the final date for payment of the instalment draws near, the collector is sure to receive requests from each of his *tabsildārs* to use his personal influence to urge other *tabsildārs*, some within the same district and some beyond it, to make a serious attempt to collect the money, for which official reminders have already been sent *ad nauseam*. And the collector in his turn will send stern orders to his own offending *tabsildārs* and polite personal requests to his fellow-collectors to do the same with regard to their *tabsildārs*, and finally all the money capable of being collected comes in.

In the old days a *tabsildār* considered it an aspersion to leave a single pie outstanding by the last day fixed for payment, but with the hard times on which agriculture has fallen in consequence of the post-War slump in the prices of grain, other standards have arisen, and *tabsildārs* are now expected to pay more attention to sympathetic methods than to rigorous insistence on prompt and complete payment.



A COTTON MARKET





*Maintenance of the Land Records.* The land records are prepared every year by the *patwāri* in minutest detail. Every single field is shown on the village map, together with full particulars about the rights of the landlord and the tenant, the rent, the crops, the means of irrigation, and so on.

The original object, however, of this elaborate survey was, it must be confessed, not to protect the people's rights but to provide a basis for the assessment of the land revenue.

Every *patwāri*'s records are checked every season by an inspector known as a supervisor *kānūngo* who usually has about twenty *patwāris*' circles in his charge; and the records of a certain number of *patwāris* are checked each year by the *tahsildār* and his assistant and the sub-divisional officer, while over all the collector exercises a general supervision. Yet even this formidable hierarchy does not avail to keep out wrong entries altogether.

*Protection of the Interests of Agriculturists.* A good collector is the peasants' friend, and holds none of his trusts more sacred than their welfare. Especially is he on the alert to come to their assistance in all times of special need. If they require money for sinking wells or buying cattle or seed, he grants them a loan at a low rate of interest; if the crops fail, he lessens the blow not merely by a loan but by a suspension or remission of their rent, to which the landlords' consent is won by a proportionate reduction in the demand of land revenue from them; and if the distress is so widespread as to amount to famine, work is provided for the able-bodied, and money, food and clothes for others. In these and innumerable other ways the collector protects the interests of the peasants committed to his charge.

But the peasants are not the only agriculturists. There are the landlords too. These, as a rule, are quite capable of looking after themselves and their estates, but there are exceptions; and when there is a danger of a big estate being ruined for want of proper care, the collector steps in and assumes control as manager of the Court of Wards. The ground of incapacity may be that the owner is a minor, or a woman (!), or insane, or extravagant, or just incompetent. The estate is managed for the benefit of the owner and his heirs, and as soon as this can be safely done

is restored to the family. Some owners, however, do not appreciate the Government's beneficence, and, regardless of the ultimate prosperity of their estates, badger the collector and the special manager, who works under him, for extra grants unceasingly.

*Control of the Revenue Courts.* Petty revenue cases are tried by *tabshildars* and the more serious ones by sub-divisional officers, but the collector hears all appeals from *tabshildars* and certain classes of appeals from sub-divisional officers, and is also responsible for seeing that sub-divisional officers and *tabshildars* alike dispose of their cases with reasonable despatch. Other appeals from sub-divisional officers go partly to the commissioner in charge of the division and partly to the district judge.

The system is far from ideal. In the first place it is anomalous that matters of a judicial or quasi-judicial character should be tried by executive authorities at all.

In partial recognition of this view the law provides that those appeals from sub-divisional officers which relate to specially judicial matters, such as claims for rent or estate profits, should go to the district judge, but the compromise has itself introduced an additional evil—an element of confusion: for sometimes the issues in a case are such that they have to be decided partly by a civil and partly by a revenue court: and sometimes the same issue is decided in one way by a civil court and in another by a revenue one.

And, lastly, the opportunities for appeal provided by the system are a positive encouragement to litigation. For in many cases not one but two or even three appeals are allowed, up to the High Court and the Board of Revenue: and sometimes an appeal lies even from these exalted authorities to the Privy Council. Is this a reflection on the competency of the Indian courts—or a concession to the obstinacy of litigants, or the avidity of lawyers?

*Custody of the Treasury.* Any sane person in England who has a large amount of money in his charge gets a bank to keep it for him, but most collectors in India are debarred from that expedient. For in most districts there is either no bank at all, or at any rate no branch of the particular bank with which the Government deal. In such districts the collector has to keep the money

himself. He does not, of course, keep it in his private house but in the Treasury, which is rendered as burglar-proof as possible and guarded perpetually by armed police.

The money in the treasury usually amounts to many thousands of pounds, which represents the local incomings, particularly from land revenue, and is used for day-to-day expenses.

A deputy collector, known as the treasury officer, is in immediate charge, but the daily transactions are carried out by a non-official called the treasurer or his agent, to whom the treasury officer entrusts a certain sum each morning.

Besides the cash, the treasury contains the district's stock of stamps, some kinds of which are issued to post-offices and others to licensed vendors for sale; and also opium and other 'treasures'. The details I will leave for our inspection later.

*Administration of Excise.* About no subject did the Government under the old Constitution put their tongue in their cheek so much as in their declarations about excise. On the one hand they were bound, in deference to public opinion, to express whole-hearted sympathy with the advocates of temperance, but on the other they could not possibly afford to give up the substantial profits arising from duty and licence-fees, which amounted in the United Provinces, for instance, to more than a tenth of the total revenue of all kinds. So a high-sounding but contradictory formula was devised: 'the maximum of revenue with the minimum of consumption'. The collector, knowing what this meant, watched the income and let the consumption look after itself. But now all that is to be changed; and in August 1937 the working committee of the Congress decided that total prohibition must be introduced within three years.

We shall see at our inspection later that the chief excisable commodities are country liquor, drugs and opium; but here let me ask the reader not to be shocked by the mention of the last two named. The drugs are not the sinister ones of the Western world but the comparatively innocuous products of the hemp plant, the effects of which, when eaten or smoked, are hardly worse than those of alcohol; and the opium is used mainly for medicinal purposes, and even when taken merely for pleasure, is

generally eaten, not smoked, and in such small quantities that the opium-addict of India, as a rule, is in no worse state than the cigarette-slave of England. Moreover, the cultivation of the opium-poppy is being gradually restricted, it having been decided that the export of opium, except for medicinal purposes, is unworthy of any Government claiming to be civilized.

*The District Officer as District Magistrate.* As district magistrate the district officer's main duties are the maintenance of law and order, the supervision of the magisterial courts, and the control of firearms.

*The Maintenance of Law and Order.* This comprehensive term, which slips so glibly from our lips in India, really includes two functions: (i), the detection and prevention of crime in general; (ii), the prevention and quelling of riots or more serious disturbances. The first is performed mainly by the police, but in the performance of the second the magistrates also play an important part.

This is the first time I have had occasion to mention those essential people, the police; and I must now digress to explain briefly how they are organized and distributed.

The head of the district police is the superintendent, who like the district officer is more often than not a Britisher. He usually has one or more assistants, known as assistant or deputy-superintendent according to whether they belong to the All-India or provincial service; and beneath them are two or three inspectors and about thirty sub-inspectors.

The rank and file consists of head constables, *naiks* and constables, amounting in most districts to about four hundred men.

A considerable part of the police are kept at headquarters in what are known as The Lines, and act as a reserve, particularly for the prevention or quelling of disturbances.

The rest are distributed among police-stations, of which there are on an average three or four in each sub-division, the staff of each station amounting to only about a dozen men, and the circle, as the beat is usually called, to over 125 square miles.

Each police-station is in charge of a sub-inspector known as the station officer, who sometimes has another sub-inspector to assist him.

There is also a *chaukidār* for every two or three villages, whose main duties are the arrest of persons committing serious offences and the supply of local information to the station officer. He is also expected, however, to render the police every form of assistance, even to the extent of risking his life in encounters with armed dacoits. Indeed this humble part-time servant of the King-Emperor, on a salary of 4s. 6d. a month, is almost as indispensable for the police as the *patwārī* is for the revenue authorities.

What is the relationship of the magistrates to the police?

It is delicate and ill-defined. On the one hand the police of the district are under the orders of the superintendent and no one else, but on the other the district magistrate is required to exercise a general control over the criminal administration. The district magistrate then is not concerned with the discipline or internal arrangements of the police, but he is concerned with the way in which they keep down crime and restrain disorder.

It is not, however, always easy to distinguish between the two aspects: and great tact is necessary on the part both of the district magistrate and the superintendent of police if that co-operation, which is so essential for the efficient administration of the district, is to be achieved. Usually the two work together happily enough, but it would be idle to pretend that there is always perfect harmony.

The same kind of difficulty arises sometimes between sub-divisional magistrates and the police, for the sub-divisional magistrate has the same kind of responsibility for his sub-division as the district magistrate for the district.

To return to the original question, how is crime detected and prevented?

It is mainly a matter for the sub-inspector, who may be aptly described as the backbone of the police.

Detection, however, is not his strong point, his usual idea of an investigation being to record a mass of statements with little use of inference or observation. It is hardly, therefore, surprising that it is exceptional for more than 10 per cent of burglaries, which in



most police circles constitute about half the reported crime, to be brought home direct to the offender.

In some respects, however, the sub-inspector is more to be pitied than to be blamed. Not for him is the leisured concentration on a single case which the English detective (at any rate, according to the stories) enjoys. Imagine what may happen! The sub-inspector is busy making arrangements for protecting the railway along which the Viceroy is to pass in a few days when he hears that a dacoity has been committed in a remote village ten miles away. He mounts his horse and dashes off to investigate; and in the evening, when he returns, he is greeted with the news that a murder has been committed at the other end of the circle and that he has been summoned to give evidence at headquarters the next day. And when at length he finds time to visit the scene of the murder he is met with a conspiracy of silence except for the tainted statements of a coterie who wish to implicate an enemy.

So what is the poor sub-inspector to do?

But fortunately detection is not the only weapon in the sub-inspector's armoury. For dealing with professional crime he has a far more potent weapon in what are known as the preventive sections of the Criminal Procedure Code.

This is the sort of thing that happens. There is an outbreak of burglaries in a certain neighbourhood. The sub-inspector has been unable to obtain evidence good enough for a court in any of the cases, but from inquiries from the *chaukidars* and other local residents he has come to the conclusion that one Ram Parshad is the guilty man.

So the sub-inspector quietly proceeds to weave a net of evidence around him. Luckily Ram Parshad is already discredited among decent folk by the 'history-sheet' which the police have maintained for him for several years. This is a good starting-point, and from now on whenever a burglary is committed near Ram Parshad's home the sub-inspector carefully notes in the history-sheet the reason for suspecting him. Then he sounds the headmen of the villages round about and impresses upon them their duty of declaring in court their opinion about this enemy of society.

Finally, when all is ripe, the sub-inspector has a report sent to the sub-divisional magistrate to the effect that Ram Parshad has

the reputation of being an habitual burglar and should be bound over to be of good behaviour for a year. The magistrate thereupon issues a warrant and calls upon Ram Parshad to show cause why he should not be so bound over.

The headmen and other leading people flock to the court and unanimously testify to Ram Parshad's evil reputation; and, if the sub-inspector has done his work well, not a single reputable person can be found to say a word on the other side.

But, of course, in a civilized country you cannot send a man to jail on mere suspicion. Oh, dear, no! Ram Parshad is merely required to produce two sureties, and if he fails to do so and has to go to jail instead, why, whose fault is that? Surely not the sub-inspector's!

Sometimes the police are able to have a malefactor—or at any rate a prospective one—put away with much less trouble. Perhaps a patrolling constable comes upon some one in the dead of night many miles from his own home, and perhaps he even has a jemmy on his person. If so that is the end of that wayfarer for a year. For in such circumstances how could the most ingenious liar hope to comply with the magistrate's demand that he should give 'a satisfactory account' of himself?

A problem peculiar to India is presented by members of the criminal tribes—that is, people whose traditional occupation is the commission of some kind of theft. To restrain those who do not reform a truly repressive law has been devised. For as soon as one of these people is convicted of any offence involving theft he may be registered and forbidden to leave his house at night; and to enforce the rule the *chaukidār* is required to hold a roll-call every night. But in practice it is not so irksome as it sounds. After all, the *chaukidār* is only human!

So much, then, for the detection and prevention of general crime. Let us pass on to the other chief ingredient in the maintenance of law and order—the prevention and quelling of riots.

Prevention in this respect has really a different meaning from the way in which it was used before, for the prevention of a riot means preventing any riot breaking out at all, whereas by the prevention of crime was meant preventing a man, who is believed to have committed crimes already, from committing any more.

Prevention indeed from having been merely a second-best method now assumes the rank of undoubted first place.

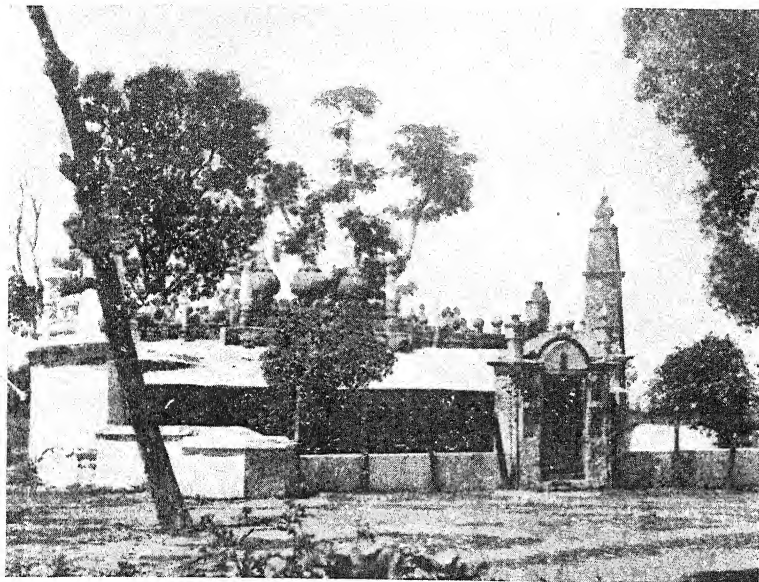
The best thing is to prevent a riot altogether, the next best is to quell it as effectively and with as little damage as possible.

Riots are much more common in India than in England. Some occur so suddenly that prevention is out of the question, but two of the main origins of riots are such that they can be known soon enough for the authorities to take precautions. I refer to village feuds and religious disputes.

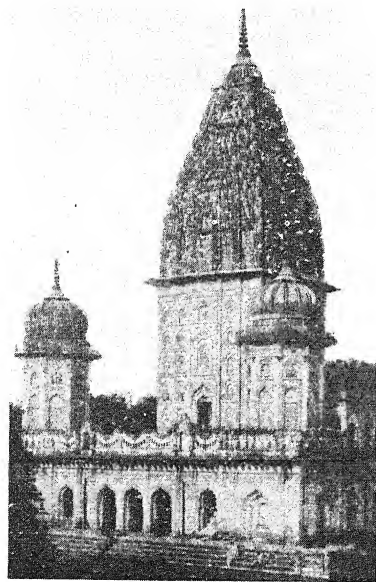
Let me take a typical instance of each kind of trouble.

First, a village feud. Two parties, let us say, each claim proprietary possession of certain land, and in furtherance of their claim demand rents from the tenants of the estate. One party is supported by some tenants, the second by others. Clashes occur, and reports and counter-reports are made at the police-station. The sub-inspector admonishes the parties, but to no purpose. The incidents still occur and the reports continue to be made. So finally the sub-inspector makes a list of the most troublesome members of each party and sends it to the sub-divisional magistrate with the recommendation that both sides be bound over to keep the peace. When the parties appear in court one of two things happens. Either each side gives evidence against the other to the discomfiture of both, or both sides swear that there is no quarrel and thereby escape for the time being. But in the latter event if, in spite of their avowal, the parties proceed to fight it out the sub-divisional magistrate will get his chance of binding them over when he convicts them of the offence of rioting.

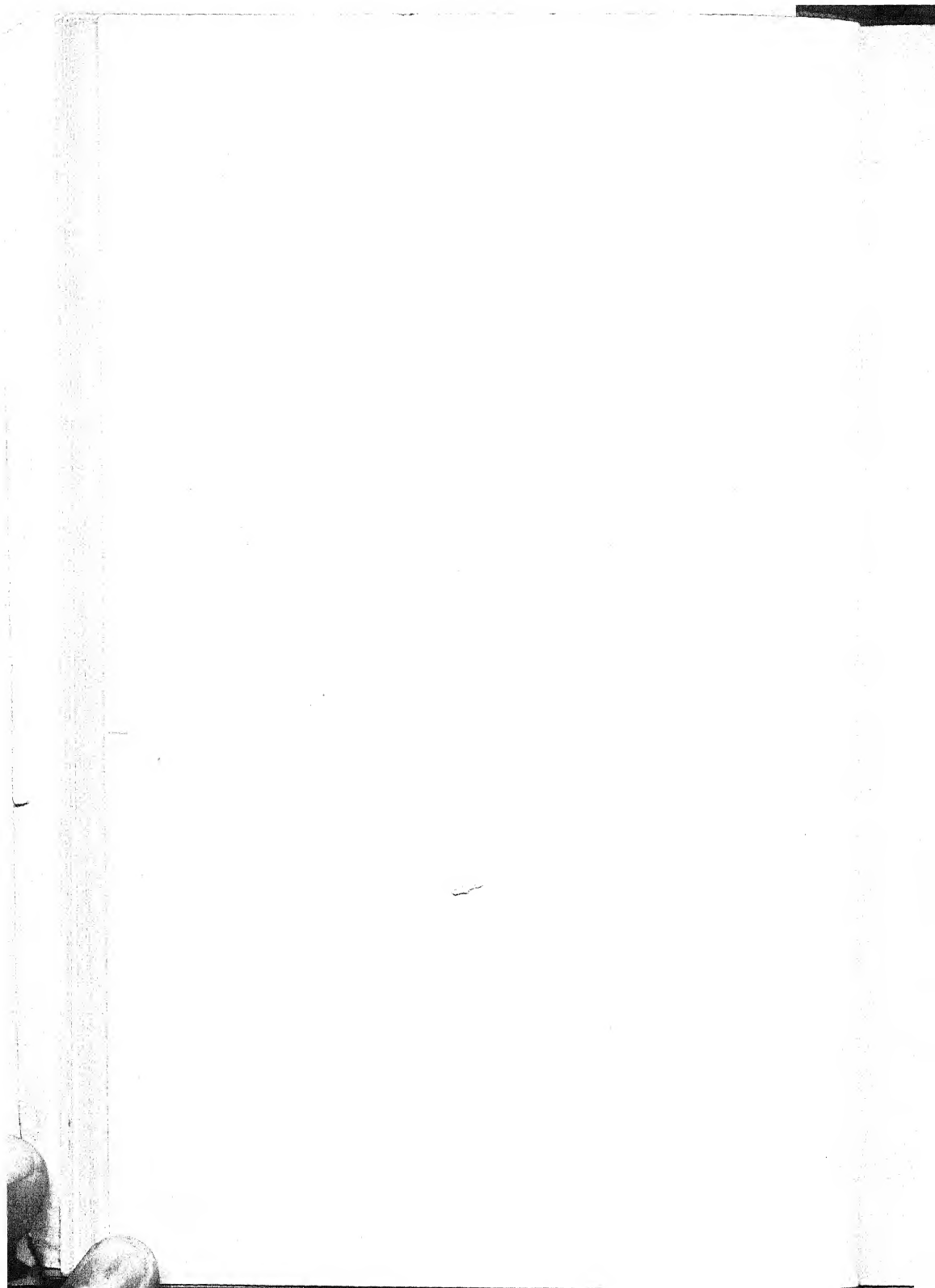
Next a religious dispute. This time we will imagine that the Hindus have announced their intention of taking out a procession on the occasion of a festival. The Muslims object on the ground that the Hindus have never done this before, and that the passing of the procession before a mosque will interfere with the public prayers. The sub-divisional magistrate, guided by the district magistrate, tries to effect a compromise. He suggests to the Hindus that they change the route of their procession so as to avoid the mosque. But the Hindus are adamant, and finally the district magistrate is faced with the alternatives of either prohibiting the procession altogether or permitting it on certain conditions,



A LITTLE MOSQUE



A 'SHOW' TEMPLE TO VISHNU



such as that the processionists shall carry no weapons of any kind and that the procession shall not pass the mosque at the time of evening prayers, which is the special time for public worship.

If the procession is permitted, and in spite of all precautions trouble is still likely, recourse is had to more forceful methods such as the employment of extra police armed with muskets. The mere knowledge that the armed police are at hand does a good deal to curb the angry passions of the antagonists, but religious fervour sometimes proves too strong, and a sudden incident may in a moment precipitate matters and set hundreds of men to fight madly with each other. The police will do their utmost to suppress the disturbance with truncheons or *lāthīs*, but that may prove ineffectual, and the situation may threaten to pass out of control with the danger not only of the rioters' wounding and killing an indefinite number of each other, but also of the police being overwhelmed.

Rapidly the magistrate has to make a decision which may later be the subject of long inquiry by the Government and hours of discussion in the provincial legislature. Should he order fire or not? Momentous issues hang on the answer: and whatever he does, he will certainly have to explain his conduct later. If he decides to order fire he will become the butt of the politicians and the Press; if on the other hand he acts weakly, he will have to justify himself to the Government—presuming, that is, that the Government under the new régime will act in this respect substantially as in the past.

The last force of all to be employed consists of troops, but they are so rarely used in an ordinary district that they can be ignored for our present purpose.

We have now had a glimpse of the part played by the magistrates and police respectively in the maintenance of law and order. Before we pass on let me give a brief appreciation of the work of the police.

Mud-slingers in India find the police an excellent target because they cannot sling back. Now I am not prepared to say that the Indian police are saints. Probably the Indian police force has more than its fair share of corruption, nor is the average Indian police officer over-scrupulous about the way in which he discovers a



man's guilt or the genuineness of the evidence which he produces to prove it. But the Indian police have, at any rate, two redeeming qualities. They are courageous and intensely loyal to their salt: and every Britisher who was in India during the stormy days of Non-Co-operation will always remember with gratitude how undauntedly they faced danger and endured hardship, and how faithfully they resisted traitorous suggestions.

*Supervision of the Magisterial Courts.* The magisterial courts are numerous and of various kinds. Some are stipendiary and some honorary: some of the honorary magistrates sit singly and some as benches; and the fines and periods of imprisonment they may inflict vary from fifty to a thousand rupees, and from one month to two years. But in spite of their number the magistrates are all kept fully occupied, for litigation is the Indian's hobby.

Over all these magistrates the district magistrate keeps a watchful eye, stimulating the lethargic by constant prodding and hardening the soft-hearted by holding over their heads the knowledge that an acquittal or undue leniency in a police case will have to be fully justified.

But the district magistrate is not merely the chief magistrate from an executive point of view. As a judicial officer the proceedings of the subordinate magistrates come constantly before him, either in appeal or for revision. For there is hardly any kind of magisterial decision that cannot be set aside by some authority or other; and accused and (in a private case) complainant exploit to the uttermost every right granted them by the law.

As judicial officer the district magistrate has a rival. For the judicial head of the district is not the district magistrate but the sessions judge, who is merely our old friend the district judge in another guise. For practical purposes what concerns the district magistrate is that the sessions judge hears appeals from the subdivisional magistrates and tries the cases committed by them—in other words, may decide at some stage all the most important cases. Many of the judges are recruited not from the Indian Civil Service but from the Provincial Judicial Service, who, up to the time of their appointment as assistant judge, have tried nothing but civil cases and have no experience of what may be reasonably

considered as proof for the purpose of conviction. A judge of this type will make the district magistrate and superintendent of police tear their hair with his constant acquittals of the arch-troublers of the public peace. The executive authorities' only remedy is to move the Government to appeal to the High Court, but such efforts are discouraged by the Government and High Court alike.

*Control of Firearms.* The obtaining of an arms-licence in India is not a simple financial transaction as in England, for in India the demand for arms-licences and the necessity of restricting them are both much greater.

The strong demand may be attributed to three main causes.

First, firearms are required for protection. Most villages are many miles away from the nearest police-station, so that a man must be prepared to protect his own house from burglars or dacoits, or defend himself against robbers on highway or byway. The mere knowledge that a man has a gun and is ready and able to use it is often sufficient to scare off marauders.

Next, firearms are required for sport. Shooting is not the almost exclusive sport of the wealthy as in England, for outside the Government forests no one owns the game, and you can walk and shoot where you please. So there is no end to the number of budding sportsmen.

And lastly, firearms are required for display. The Indian loves to make a show and to exalt himself above his fellow-men; and one of the recognized ways of doing this is to adorn oneself and one's retainers with lethal weapons.

But the district magistrate must go warily, for a dishonest licensee may lend his gun to a dacoit, and a careless or faint-hearted one may allow it to be stolen. Specially sparing must he be in granting a licence for a pistol or revolver, lest it fall into the hands of a would-be assassin. And besides the danger to human life, the district magistrate has also to consider the protection of game. For game-creatures are relentlessly harried in season and out, and there is a serious danger of the extermination of those kinds that breed in India.

But the district magistrate cannot settle the problem by just

refusing to grant licences except to really trustworthy applicants. There is another aspect. The politicians have seized on the administration of the Arms Act and rules as a test of the British sympathy with India's aspirations and of the equal treatment of Britisher and Indian. They even go so far as to assert that the British raj by depriving Indians of the knowledge of the use of arms robbed them of their manliness.

The Government of India have bowed before the verbal storm, and whereas in the old days Europeans carried arms without a licence and Indians obtained licences with great difficulty, it was decided soon after the Great War to amend the rules so that no European as such is any longer exempt from the necessity of taking out a licence and the exemptees that remain are mainly Indians. Some high officials are exempted, but a district magistrate is not considered distinguished enough, and so we have the Gilbertian situation that a district magistrate has to grant himself a licence.

The result of these new rules is that the number of firearms in the possession of private persons in the United Provinces has more than trebled itself.

The district magistrate, then, is in a quandary, having to compromise between the conflicting principles of politics and administration; and while showing a sympathetic attitude towards the Indian's passion for firearms, he must see that licences are not given so indiscriminately as to leave him without control over their distribution.

*The District Officer as Head of the District.* As head of the district, the district officer has thrust upon him a host of miscellaneous jobs—anything in fact which is nobody else's special business. It is true that when any duty devolves on him by statute he is referred to as collector or district magistrate, but many of these duties have nothing to do with magisterial or revenue administration, and the reason for the nomenclature in the statutes is merely that the law does not recognize the existence of the district officer by name.

I cannot attempt to enumerate all these duties, but my reader will get some idea of how multifarious they are when I say that

they include such subjects as the disposal of treasure-trove, the destruction of dangerous wild animals, the maintenance of survey bench-marks, the arrangements for religious fairs, and, most difficult task of all, the provision of shikar for distinguished personages.

But apart from these rather arbitrarily imposed odd jobs, there are others which belong to the head of the district naturally, and may be classified according to their concern with his relation to the Government, to officers who are not subordinate to him, to public bodies, or to the people respectively.

*The District Officer's Position vis-à-vis the Government.* The district officer is, so to speak, the Government's local agent. It is he who must keep them informed of all important happenings in the district: it is he whose views are constantly sought, sometimes to an embarrassing extent, for he is expected to be able to give an opinion on any subject, varying from the rate of stabilization of the rupee to the admission of untouchables to Hindu temples: it is he who has to make recommendations for honours—also a matter of embarrassment; and it is he who has to speak on the Government's behalf, to spread their propaganda, to launch new movements or to raise subscriptions for public causes. To put it concisely, the district officer must act as the Government's eyes, ears, mouthpiece and hands—if I may say so without making the Government out to be a multi-organed monster.

*The District Officer's Position vis-à-vis Officers who are not subordinate to him and Public Bodies.* So far I have told you nothing about public bodies, and little about the officers not subordinate to the district officer: and to describe a relationship before the things related sounds rather like putting the cart before the horse. In spite of this obvious criticism, however, I think it will be more convenient to keep the other officers till the next chapter. But the public bodies I will dispose of now.

It would be possible to devote many pages to a description of the public bodies and their functions, but much can be left to the reader's imagination from his experience of similar institutions in England.

The most important public body is the district board, which

deals with the welfare of the rural area and is analogous to an English county council. The main objects of its activities are elementary schools, non-provincial roads, hospitals for man and beast, sanitation, ferries and cattle-pounds, but, unlike a county council, it has no control over the police.

For urban areas there are two main kinds of public bodies—municipal boards for large towns and town area committees for small ones—with an occasional notified area committee for a town of a size somewhere between.

There is usually one, and only one, municipality in a district, the English parallel being a borough. Within municipal limits the municipal board, generally speaking, performs all the duties performed by the district board elsewhere, but it has additional duties and the relative importance of its various duties is naturally different, the municipal board's main concern being with conservancy, street-drainage, water, light, roads and schools.

There are usually about half a dozen town areas in a district: and the functions of these committees resemble those of a municipal board, but they are on a much lower scale and fewer, schools, pounds and important roads being left to the district board.

In certain selected villages also there are public bodies called *panchayats*, but they bear little resemblance to an English parish council, for their duties, at any rate as interpreted by themselves, are mainly judicial. The proceeds of fines, however, imposed by them are devoted to the improvement of local amenities, such as repair of wells.

Over all these bodies the district officer exercises some kind of supervision, but it varies greatly according to the nature of the body. Over *panchayats* the district officer wields autocratic powers; and town area committees too, thanks specially to their having the sub-divisional magistrate as chairman, readily accept the district officer's advice. But with municipal and district boards the position is different. Both of those kinds of boards are now entirely non-official except perhaps for a few Government nominees; and if, as some of them do, they choose to go their own way and ignore the district officer's advice, he has hardly any effective means of control.

But supervision does not exhaust the district officer's relation to

the boards, for in so far as they are independent they must rank with the other independent authorities in the district—the officers in charge of the various Government departments. Now these various authorities do not work in water-tight compartments, but come into constant contact with each other; and to ease the friction that inevitably arises, a mediator is occasionally required. Thus the municipal board and Public Works Department may each claim control over the same bit of land: or the Canals Department may refuse to accept responsibility for having flooded a road maintained by the district board; or the size of the extra guard sent by the superintendent of police to protect a breach in the jail wall may seem to the superintendent of the jail to be an invitation to his desperadoes to escape; or the forest officer may defend his pigs against the agricultural superintendent's charge of having uprooted his best crop of ground-nuts. In all such contingencies the intervention of some third party may be required: and for such a purpose who more appropriate than the district officer?

*The District Officer vis-à-vis the People.* To the man in the street—or perhaps I should say the man in the field—the district officer is not merely the chief representative of the Government in the district but almost the Government itself. Viceroys and Governors and even Commissioners are legendary figures, rarely, if ever, seen by most of the village folk, but the district officer is always with them and always ready to intervene, when necessary, in their own particular affairs. In the eyes of the ordinary villager the district officer is omniscient and omnipotent.

The more sophisticated do not, it is true, hold such an exalted view as that, but even they believe that there is hardly anything which the district officer cannot either do himself or by his personal recommendation get done by others: and it is this belief, more than anything else, that attracts such crowds of visitors to his house.

The district officer must not only act the part of head of the district—he must also look it and be prepared to lay foundation-stones, present prizes, 'grace' garden-parties, or attend any of the countless functions in which Indians seem to find a never-ending source of pleasure.

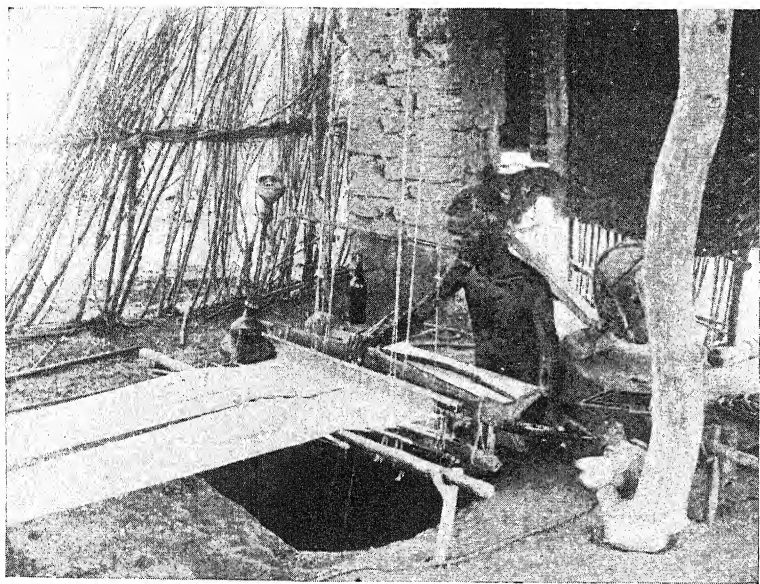


And in a way the district officer is representative not merely of the Government but of the King-Emperor himself. Of this the King-Emperor's portrait, which hangs above the district officer's chair in court, is an ever-present reminder, but the fact is most openly proclaimed when he presides in state at a durbar of all the great ones of the district. And if his sombre attire—by some perversity he is denied the right of wearing uniform—contrasts sadly with the brightly coloured silk of the coats and turbans with which the *darbāris* are adorned, this incongruity is almost redeemed by the raised silver throne, on which he sits, and the crimson canopy which stretches over him.

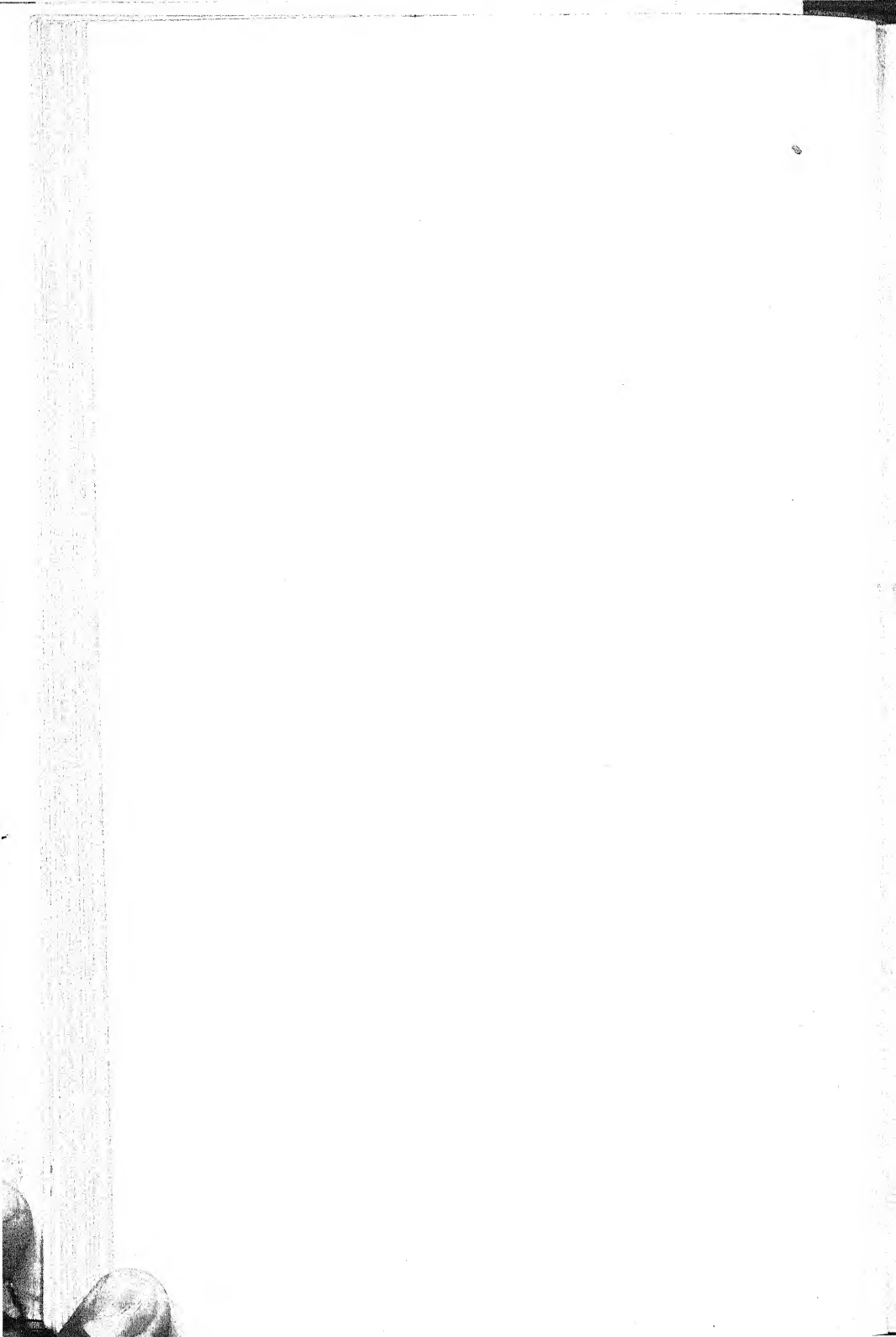
And there in those magnificent surroundings let me leave the district officer for a while and give my reader a well-earned breathing space.



A POTTER



A WEAVER



### CHAPTER III

## THE ADMINISTRATION OF AN INDIAN DISTRICT — PART II

Other Officers and Departments—A District Officer's Typical Day—Some Practical Maxims

THE last chapter was devoted mainly to an analysis of the duties of the District Officer. In the present chapter I intend first to give a summary account of the work performed in the district by officers belonging to other departments: after that I shall describe a district officer's typical day; and finally I shall enumerate a few practical maxims of district administration.

In addition to the district officer there are two other officers who reside at the headquarters of every district; namely, the superintendent of police and the civil surgeon. Besides these, all districts have a judge and a district engineer (as the officer of the Roads and Buildings branch of the Public Works Department is called), and most districts have an executive engineer of the Irrigation (or Canals) branch of the same department, and some a forest officer, though the jurisdiction of all these officers may extend to more than one district. Moreover the departments relating to education, income-tax, agriculture, excise, co-operative societies and posts and telegraphs, all have district activities, but the charges of the superior officers of these departments are too great for any particular district to claim these officers as its own.

*The Superintendent of Police.* Next to the district officer the superintendent of police—or the *Captān Sāhib* as he is popularly called—is the most powerful executive officer: in fact Authority (with a big A) may be said to consist of these two officers. The English counterpart of the superintendent of police in India is not the officer of the same title but the chief constable; and for once in a way the Indian nomenclature is superior. In India the

superintendent of police has little time for investigating crime himself, and has, as a rule, to content himself with supervising the investigations of his sub-inspectors. Apart from that his time is mainly occupied with the maintenance of discipline and the training of his men and general administrative duties. Occasionally, however, he has more thrilling work when he has to direct the efforts of his men against a mob of rioters or leads a raid on armed dacoits.

*The Civil Surgeon.* The civil surgeon is the chief doctor of the district, and is the medical attendant of superior Government officers; and in his private capacity his services are at the disposal of any resident of the district—though not, of course, free.

He is also in charge of the main hospital and supervises the branch hospitals, of which there is usually one at the headquarters of each sub-division.

He also used to be responsible for the general health of the district, but the last duty is now often entrusted to health officers, with whom I will deal presently.

Besides the medical duties above mentioned, the civil surgeon has many miscellaneous ones, the most important, perhaps, being the holding of post-mortem examinations, and in consequence the giving of evidence in nearly all murder trials.

He is also superintendent of the jail; and this is one of the most glaring instances of the way in which professional qualifications are wasted in India, for most of his jail duties require no medical knowledge at all. It is true, indeed, that it is always the superintendent's proud boast that the jail is the healthiest place in the district, as shown by the low death-rate, but to the cynic it may occur that the jail has not its full share of old and decrepit people, and that when a prisoner threatens to die the superintendent, with strange inconsistency, discovers that his only chance of life is immediate release from jail.

*Health Officers.* There are about two health officers in most districts, and their main duties are the encouragement of village sanitation and the prevention or checking of epidemic diseases.

Their first task is a thankless one. They may get a few soakage-

pits built to take the place of the common insanitary type of cess-pool, and induce a few people to bury their refuse, and get a few model wells constructed, but they can make no real impression on the general conditions for they have large charges and few powers, and are met with an inbred indifference to hygiene in any form or shape.

In coping with epidemics, the health officers are more successful, but this side of their work can be conveniently left for the chapter on Indian problems.

*The Judge.* The judge is the most independent of all the officers of a district; and in order that he may not get tainted by wicked executive notions he is not allowed to live in the same house as the district magistrate or the superintendent of police. Quite often there is a sessions judge for a single district, but sometimes his jurisdiction extends to several districts, in which case there will be additional or assistant judges, the first-named having the same judicial powers as the sessions judge himself. All criminal cases go in the first place to a magistrate, but some classes of cases can be decided only by a judge, and some cases demand a more severe penalty than a magistrate is competent to inflict, and, when such a case comes before him, the magistrate commits the prisoner for trial before the judge. A European may claim to be tried by a jury, but otherwise the usual procedure is for the judge to give the verdict himself after consulting two or three assessors. The judge has to record their opinion, but is not bound to accept it, and in fact usually ignores it. The assessors indeed rarely give an opinion of any value; and if the system is intended to approximate to trial by one's peers, it is just a silly sham. If the system were abolished no one would regret it, and those who have the misfortune to be included in the list of persons liable to serve would be much relieved.

But the judge is not merely the sessions judge—he is also the district judge, and in that capacity has to try civil cases. As district judge, too, he may have the assistance of other judges with varying powers; and there will certainly be several subordinate civil courts presided over by *Munsifs* ('dispensers of justice').



## IMPRESSIONS OF AN INDIAN CIVIL SERVANT

The district judge is also the registrar of deeds, but the actual registration is carried out by sub-registrars. There is usually one at the headquarters of each sub-division, but if the work is too light to make it profitable to employ a whole-time man, the job is thrown on to the *tahsildār*. The paid post is much sought after, for it is one of the few clerical posts for which no literary qualifications are demanded except a knowledge of Urdu and Nagari script.

*The District Engineer.* The district engineer is not such an intimate part of the district staff as he used to be. In the old days he was responsible for the construction and maintenance of all metalled roads and public buildings, but now the district board has taken over the less important roads and the various officers arrange for the repair of their own buildings and also for small extensions through contractors. Moreover, the district engineer often has more than one district in his charge; and if he lives in another district, the district officer may never see him from the beginning of the year to the end, though he will occasionally come across the overseer or other member of the district engineer's staff who represents him in the district. The chief qualification for a district engineer is not so much an expert knowledge of dynamics as driving-power and an eye keen to detect the tricks of contractors and staff. The rates of the Public Works Department are higher than the market ones, and the popular explanation is that the original contractor has to share the profits with clerks and sub-contractors, but the defender of the department would say that the higher cost is balanced by better value, and perhaps the truth lies between the two explanations.

*Irrigation Executive Engineer.* The unit of the Irrigation or Canals Department is the division which is in charge of an executive engineer, whose assistants, like those of the district officer, are called sub-divisional officers. The water for the canals is taken from the Ganges, Jumna, and Sarda rivers. The main canals are about 100 feet wide. These supply water to the major distributaries, which in their turn fill the minor ones which take the water right up to the peasants' fields. Sometimes the

## ADMINISTRATION OF AN INDIAN DISTRICT

water is below the level of the fields and has to be lifted. A fixed time is allotted for the irrigation of every field, but when water is scarce the peasants at the end of the distributary may literally have to fight for it. The relation of supply to demand is a constant problem for the irrigation authorities; for unfortunately the drought that makes the demand for water greatest also makes the supply least and vice versa.

*The Forest Officer.* Government forests are most common in the hills, but there are sufficient in the plains to justify reference being made to the forest officer here. These forests vary greatly in character according to the nature of the country in which they are situated, but at present we are merely concerned with their effect on the general administration of the district. In this respect the outstanding fact is that they necessitate the regulation of the cutting of wood and of the grazing of cattle; and although the regulation is certainly in the interests of the neighbourhood, the people do not always realize this, and political agitators have exploited this misunderstanding to the utmost.

There remain the officers who are not resident in an ordinary district but visit it from time to time.

*The Inspector of Schools.* The inspector of schools is represented in the district by a deputy-inspector and several sub-deputy-inspectors who for most purposes are subordinate to the district board and inspect the elementary schools on the board's behalf. But in every district there is also a Government high school, where the education is of secondary standard, and often there are other similar schools, partly endowed by public benefactors and partly assisted by the Government. Over these schools neither the district board nor the deputy-inspector has any control, but the inspector exercises general supervision.

*Income-tax Department.* Most districts have an income-tax officer of their own, but the unit is rather the circle, which includes a group of districts. The collector and *tahsildars* used to make the assessments in a rough and ready way, but the creation

of a special department has amply justified itself by improved methods and enhanced receipts. The increased revenue, however, is due not entirely to less evasion of payment but also to an increase in rates. Nominally the rates are still much lower than in England, but on the other hand there are no exemptions on account of wife or family.

*The Agricultural Department.* The chief business of the Agricultural Department is to distribute seed and modern implements, while in some districts efforts are being made to improve the breed of cattle. Model farms are also maintained, and landlords are encouraged to follow this example. Perhaps the department's most valuable activity is the distribution of seed. Payment is made at harvest-time: and the man, who obtains it from the Government instead of the *banya*, reaps the double advantage that he gets better seed and pays a lower price. The use of modern implements is still exceptional, partly on account of the peasant's conservatism and partly because the cost is too much for the petty holdings and the weight too much for the feeble cattle. The department's representative in the district is the superintendent; and his superior officer, the deputy-director, visits the district periodically.

*The Excise Department.* In respect of excise administration there prevails, as so often happens in India, a system of dual control. We have already seen that the collector manages general excise matters in the district, but there is also a separate department which in addition to co-ordinating the activities of the districts pays special attention to technical matters. From time to time an assistant excise commissioner visits each district and makes a point of inspecting the bonded warehouses where liquor and drugs are stored; and the note that he leaves is always full of references to 'wastage' and 'proof' and such mysterious matters.

*The Co-operative Department.* Through the Co-operative Department aspires to broader and more varied activities, actually it achieves little beyond the foundation of societies of co-operative

credit with the object of saving their members from the *banya's* exorbitant rates of interest. Yet even in this sphere, as we shall see when we come to the problems of India, it cannot be pronounced a success. The officer who visits the district and endeavours to stimulate the societies is called the assistant registrar.

*The Posts and Telegraphs Department.* The outlook of the Posts and Telegraphs Department is far wider than the district, and most districts contain no postal officer above the rank of postmaster, but the department's intra-district activities are important enough to warrant some mention here. As far as the despatch of letters or telegrams to the interior of the district is concerned the department has no reputation for hustle. Many villages, on account of their distance from a post-office, receive letters only once or twice a week: and even a telegram, if the destination is remote, is often slower than a messenger. And distance is not the postman's only difficulty. For, as a rule, streets have no name and houses no number, and apart from the addressee's name and description, the address consists merely of the name of a village or a ward of a city.

Even now the list of departments represented in the district is not exhaustive. There are, for instance, the State railways, but the line must be drawn somewhere, and I think I have said enough to give a general idea of the officers and departments whose activities combine to form the administration of an ordinary district.

And now having got our district into working order, let us go back again to the district officer, but this time let us be less abstract and see what he actually does on a typical day. The first problem is to decide what is a typical day. For life in camp is very different from life at headquarters, and life in the hot weather is very different from that in the cold. But a separate chapter will be devoted to inspections, which form the most important part of life in camp, and it would be hardly fair to the district officer to put him under the microscope during the trying conditions of Indian heat at its worst. So as the typical day we will take a

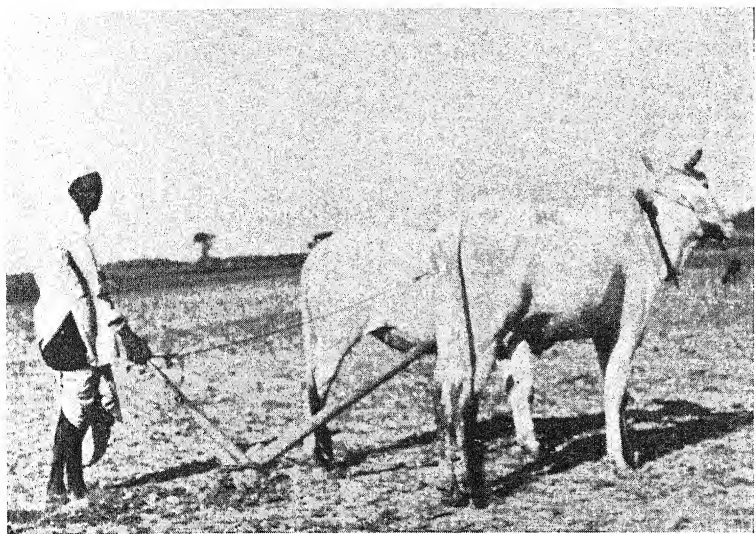
day at headquarters in the cold weather. And to get on more intimate terms with the district officer, let us give him a name, and let it be a name known and respected in India—say, Lawrence.

At daybreak Lawrence is aroused by his bearer with *chhota bāziri*, and a little later Lawrence enters his bungalow-office. He opens his diary and makes sure that he has not arranged to go out and inspect any place that morning. Then he surveys with distaste a large pile of forbidding files, the remains of yesterday's contribution from his office. He thinks regretfully of the days when his correspondence and files could all be polished off in about an hour a day and wonders whether life in the Indian Civil Service is really as thrilling as people in England imagine.

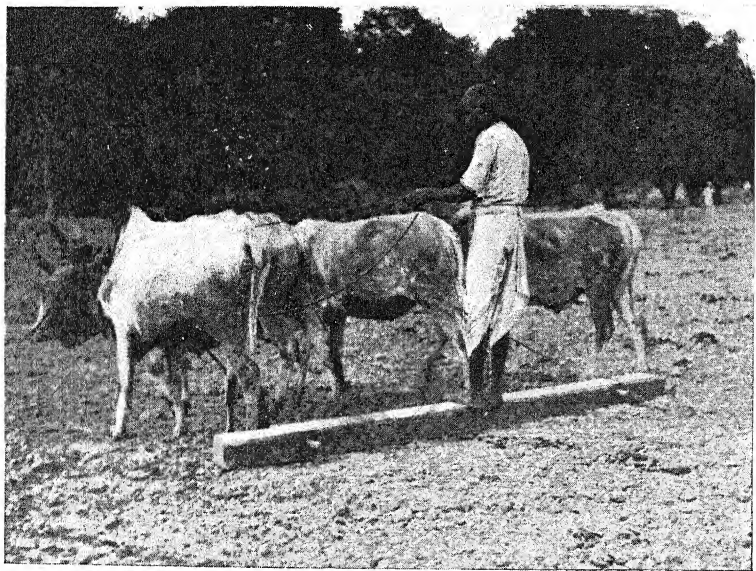
With an effort he forces himself to undo the red tape of the top file. It contains the auditor's report on a local town area. It reveals an appalling list of enormous irregularities, and there certainly seems some ground for the auditor's indignation. Still Lawrence would like to write something like this: "What on earth is the good of my wasting my time by making futile comments? Does the Auditor not know that this committee is incapable of doing anything regularly?" Instead, being a faithful servant of the Government, he takes the first step to appease the auditor and calls for a report from the committee.

In the next file Lawrence is asked to appoint a magistrate to attend an execution. In accordance with custom he nominates the latest recruit to the Indian Civil Service for this gruesome task.

Then comes a *tahsīl* inspection-book with the sub-divisional officer's notes. Lawrence is still wading through this when a *chaprāsī* enters with the personal dak which includes not only private letters but also demi-official letters addressed to Lawrence by name. There are only two d.o.'s (as people call them for short) to-day. The first is from the commissioner, inquiring when, if ever, he may expect a reply to an official letter of which Lawrence has never even heard. The second is from the collector of another district asking Lawrence to assist him in collecting land revenue from a zemindar who happens to be one of Lawrence's *tahsīldārs*. Lawrence smiles grimly and paraphrases '*Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?*' for the zemindar-*tahsīldār*'s benefit.

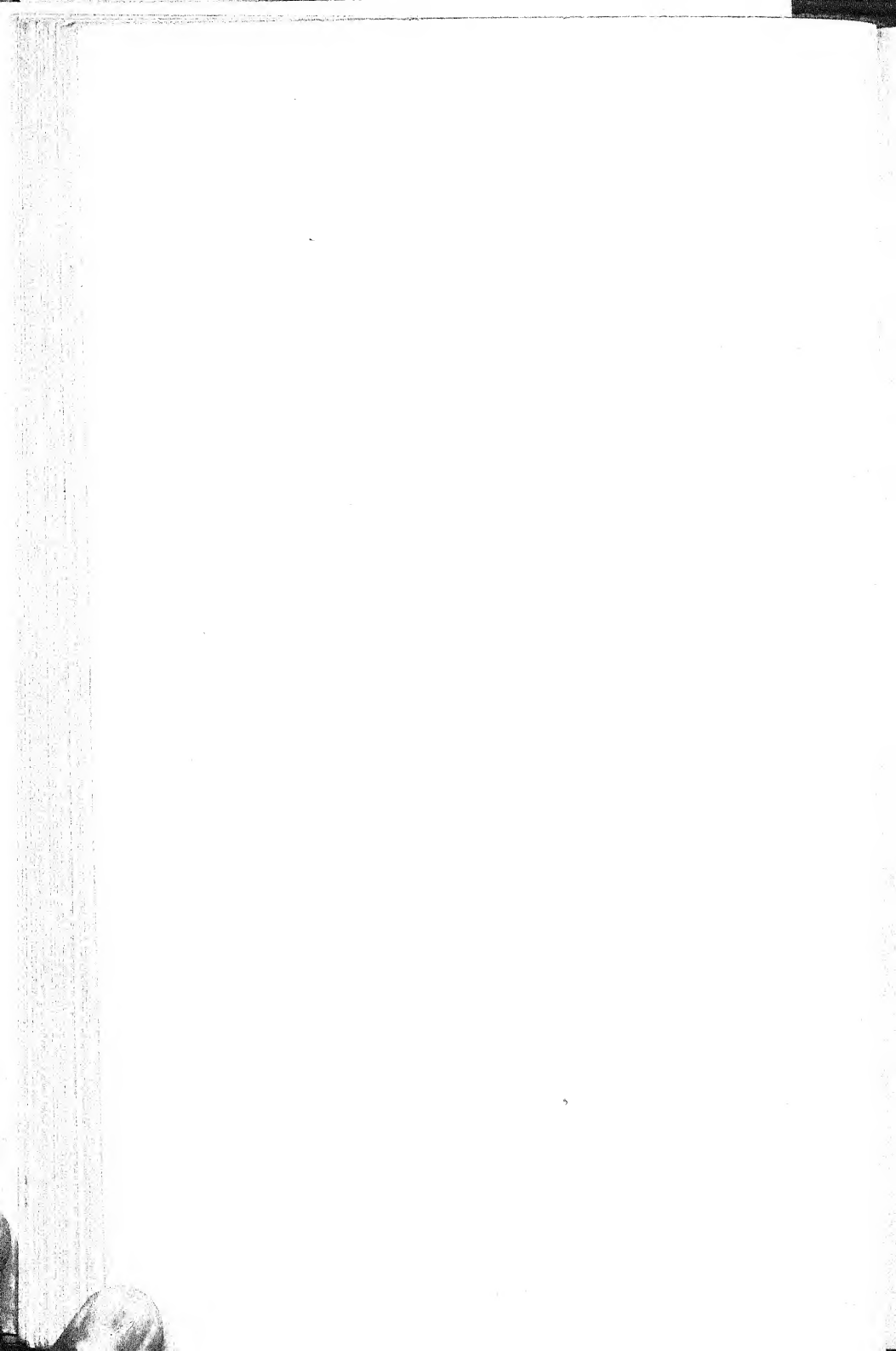


A WOODEN PLOUGH WITH BULLOCKS



LEVELLING THE GROUND





Then comes an ominous cough from the verandah. The first visitor has arrived. For a time Lawrence continues to plod through his files. Then with a sigh he touches his call-bell, and on the *chaprāsī's* appearance asks him how many visitors have arrived so far. In reply the *chaprāsī* lays seven or eight cards on the table. Lawrence hastily glances through the names. Most of them are familiar—one painfully so, for its bearer comes at least once a week and stays till he is almost literally pushed out.

The first card bears the name of 'Rai Sahib ——, Rais and Zemindar.' "Give him my salaams," says Lawrence, which is a polite way of saying, "Show him in." Like most of the visitors, the Rai Sahib cannot speak English, and the conversation has to be carried on in Hindustani. Lawrence and the Rai Sahib make polite inquiries about each other's health, and then Lawrence starts the stock conversation about the state of the crops. Lawrence knows that they are excellent, but the Rai Sahib, thinking of the evil eye, will not admit that they are more than middling. For five minutes the desultory talk continues. Then Lawrence is faced with the eternal question: "Has this visitor come for any special purpose, or simply out of courtesy?" Things must be brought to a head. "Did you want to see me about anything special?" asks Lawrence.

"There's just one thing," replies the Rai Sahib. "I have a nephew by marriage, a very fine, well-built young man who desires to serve the Government."

"In what capacity?" inquires Lawrence.

"Whatever you think him fit for."

"He must decide what post to apply for."

And after further fencing Lawrence discovers that the nephew, who has meanwhile been produced, wishes to be nominated for the post of *naib-tahsildār*, but through sheer bad luck failed to pass the examination which is one of the prescribed qualifications for all candidates. Lawrence expresses his regret that in the circumstances he is powerless. The Rai Sahib brushes this aside with an earnest declaration that Lawrence is king and can do whatever he likes. Lawrence disclaims any such omnipotence, but the Rai Sahib persists in treating this as mere regal playfulness. Finally Lawrence is compelled to stand up to indicate that the

interview is at an end, and with profound regrets bows the Rai Sahib and his nephew out.

The next two visitors want nothing except to remain on friendly relations with the collector sahib. Then come several officials. And after that a man who wants a licence for a revolver. Lawrence explains that it is the Government's policy not to give such licences unless there is special need. The visitor considers that his need is most special, and when Lawrence politely questions this, professes to believe that Lawrence thinks he is not fit to be trusted and produces testimonials of his family's loyalty dating back to the Mutiny. Lawrence assures him that it is not a question of character and repeats what he has already said several times. Finally Lawrence tells him that if he applies for a gun-licence the application will be considered; and only half-satisfied the visitor departs.

The next on the list is Lawrence's *bête noire*, the sticker. Lawrence, feeling as if he were signing his own death warrant, sends his salaams, and, digging into the basket which contains the files he has already disposed of, takes out one bearing a conspicuous yellow 'immediate' label and places it in front of him in the faint hope that this will catch his visitor's eye and induce him to mercy. In vain! The visitor either does not notice the suggestion at all or at any rate ignores it and soon is well away. He is content to do all the talking, and as he drones on Lawrence comforts himself slightly with the thought that he need not trouble to listen. "Would it be any good," he reflects as his gaze wanders to his files, "to put up a notice like they have in American offices: 'Spit it out', 'My time is valuable if yours isn't', and so on? Of course, you couldn't really do it. It would cause a revolution." Lawrence pulls his wits together. The man has been talking for ten minutes and he must be curbed at all costs. "Is there anything else special you wished to mention?" inquires Lawrence sweetly.

"Only this," says his eloquent friend, "that I always pray for the welfare of the British Empire and His Majesty the King-Emperor, and your Honour . . ."

The prayer continues for some time, and Lawrence feels that it would be *lèse-majesté*, if not blasphemy, to interrupt, but when

it is completed, he stands up and announces with regret that many other visitors are waiting to see him. This indeed cannot be contested, for protesting coughs from the verandah are plainly audible in the office.

But even this does not have the desired effect. "Who," exclaims the sticker, "would not desire to see your Honour? . . ."

Then there arrives what Lawrence prays may turn out to be a *deus ex machina*—the *khidmatgār* at the inner door with the news that breakfast is ready. But for all the effect this has on his visitor he might as well be stone-deaf.

So Lawrence has recourse to the final measure for ejecting a stubborn visitor. He rings his bell, and when the *chaprāsī* appears sends his salaams to the next visitor. Rather than face the public humiliation of being conducted out of the room by the *chaprāsī*, the sticker retires crestfallen and Lawrence goes with a sigh of relief to his breakfast.

Even at breakfast Lawrence cannot escape altogether from his visitors' attentions, for presently a *chaprāsī* enters apologetically with a card and announces that the Raja of — has arrived. "Show him into the drawing-room," says Lawrence. To have left so distinguished a gentleman in the verandah with the other visitors would have offended him deeply. Having been admitted to the inner sanctum he would not mind waiting indefinitely.

Still it is not long before Lawrence enters, and the Raja informs him that some tenants are giving him trouble and suggests that the sub-inspector of police or the *tahsildār* be directed to 'put them right', which is a euphemism for twisting their tails. Lawrence parries the suggestion, and gently hints to the Raja that the days of feudalism are over, but eventually promises that the sub-divisional officer will look into the matter; and, having obtained nothing from Lawrence except politeness and a parliamentary undertaking, the Raja departs.

After him nine or ten more visitors pass before Lawrence in quick succession. One or two are officials, the rest private persons. One man aspires to be an honorary magistrate, another drops into Lawrence's ear lurid stories of an enemy's villainy, another complains of the *patwāri*, an old soldier in full uniform inquires why the Government have been so mad as to grant *swarāj*, others come

merely out of courtesy. Last of all is a man whom Lawrence has never seen before, though he has been in charge of the district more than two years. Lawrence feels himself justified in wasting no time with him and brings him to the point at once.

"Your Honour," begins the visitor, "has an appeal to-day——"

"Anything you want to say," breaks in Lawrence sharply, "must be in open court." And with a ring of the bell he dismisses his visitor ignominiously.

By now it is a quarter to eleven, and at eleven Lawrence has to preside at a meeting of the High School Committee. The quarter of an hour must not be wasted. He calls his stenographer and proceeds to dictate his fortnightly 'd.o.' to the Commissioner, describing the chief events in the district. He dictates slowly, for the stenographer's knowledge of English is none too good, and by the time he has finished the members of the Committee have arrived.

The main points to be decided are which boys should be admitted free or at reduced fees. Most of the headmaster's recommendations are accepted without demur, but several members strongly urge the claims of one boy who has not been recommended. It is obvious that they have been 'got at', but it takes Lawrence ten precious minutes before he can close the discussion and get a majority to pass the headmaster's recommendations.

The meeting over, Lawrence hastens out to the porch where his car is waiting impatiently for him, and drives off to the next business of the day—his work in his public office and court.

On arrival at the Collectorate, Lawrence proceeds at once to his court-room and takes his seat on the dais.

His *pēshkār* then reads aloud various vernacular reports and takes his orders. Lawrence has to listen carefully, for the *pēshkār* gabbles through the stuff without showing any comprehension of its meaning, and only stops to take breath or to puzzle out a particularly unintelligible word. If he thinks that Lawrence is not paying full attention he will read out any gibberish, inventing such words as he cannot read. There is, however, some excuse for the *pēshkār*, as the Persian script, when written by a government official, is often far more difficult to decipher than the worst

English scrawl, dots of vital importance being omitted or misplaced and straightish lines being made to do duty for a succession of curves. In this jumble the Urdu equivalent for 'is' and 'is not' often look alike and the *pēshkār* is quite capable of interchanging one with the other. Can there be any wonder, then, that English is gradually replacing the vernacular and that all the more important correspondence is conducted in the English language?

Every now and then Lawrence questions the *pēshkār* about the contents of a file; and if he flounders, Lawrence does not waste further time or spoil his temper by trying to extract from the *pēshkār* information which he has not got, but orders him to go through the file and put it up again the next day.

Then several minutes are taken up as Lawrence affixes his initials and occasionally his name in full under what purports to be the Urdu version of his orders; and as file after file is laid before him he wonders whether it would not pay him to give up his salary in exchange for an anna per signature.

Having disposed of a few clerks, who have meanwhile been hovering in the background with urgent papers, Lawrence directs a *chaprāsī* to call the 'petitioners'.

The *chaprāsī*, thus bidden, goes out and shouts at the top of his voice: "If any one wishes to present a petition to the *Barē Sāhib*, let him appear." This is the signal for a motley crowd of people, who have been waiting in the compound, to make their way to Lawrence's court, each carrying a petition bearing court-fees stamps of varying denomination according to the subject. The petitions are collected by a *chaprāsī* who hands them to the *pēshkār*, while the petitioners themselves wait at the back of the court till they are summoned in turn to 'The Presence'. The *pēshkār* picks up the top petition, sees that the stamp is of the right value and kind, and carefully defaces and punches it so that it may not be used again. He then calls out the name of the petitioner—a woman—and she comes forward and stands before Lawrence with her face modestly covered and her hands clasped. The petition starts in the time-honoured way, '*Gharībparwar salāmat*' (Hail, cherisher of the poor): and the gist of it is that the petitioner's husband has turned her out, so she has gone to



live with someone else. Lawrence has no power at all to authorize such an arrangement, but he solemnly writes 'seen' on the back of the petition and hands it back to the woman who will no doubt treasure it as dearly as an English bride her marriage lines. Next comes a Brahmin with a magnificent caste-mark on his forehead, who desires permission to take out a religious procession. Lawrence sends the petition to the police to inquire whether the procession is a customary one and whether they have any objection to it. Then comes an ex-soldier in shabby khaki, who wishes to be appointed a *chaprāsī*. In consideration of his military services his name is added to an already swollen list of candidates. And so the procession continues. There are applications for a poisons-licence and for the extension of the validity of an arms-licence from the district to the province, complaints against a sub-inspector of police for demanding a bribe and against a *patwārī* for fabricating his papers, appeals against a district board tax and against a conviction by a *tahsildār*. These and a dozen more Lawrence polishes off in less than half an hour, the order in most cases being merely a preliminary one, directing an inquiry or calling for a report.

Lawrence's next duty is to hear appeals. There are four down for to-day, two criminal and two revenue.

He calls the first criminal case. On the appellants' side is a *vakīl* and on the other side a lawyer of lower status known as a *mukhtār*. The appellants, A, B, C and D, have been convicted by a bench of honorary magistrates of beating E and F with *lāthīs* and sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for one month and a fine of Rs50 each. The story of the complainants, E and F, who are brothers, is that A was recently ejected from his holding by the zemindar who then re-let the land to E. When E and F began to plough the land, A together with B, C and D, all armed with *lāthīs*, came and told them to go away; and when they refused they were attacked by A's party and knocked unconscious. The medical report shows that E and F were covered with bruises and that E's wrist was broken and F's head cut open. The appellants' story on the other hand is that the zemindar out of spite first ejected A unjustly, and, not content with this, sent E and F to A's house to beat him. The medical report shows

that A had a few bruises and scratches. A's party preferred a complaint against E and F, but this complaint was dismissed; and A's party have applied to Lawrence to order further inquiry into this complaint.

"May it please the court——" starts off the appellants' *vakil*, but he has not finished his first sentence when the complainants' *mukhtār* objects that he does not know English. Lawrence directs the *vakil* to address him in Urdu, which he does for a bit. Presently, however, English words begin to slip in, and after a time the *vakil* is speaking a mixture of Urdu and English something like this: "Lower court *ne bahut achchha* decision *diya ki yeh* question *bilkul* irrelevant *hai*." (The lower court has very rightly decided that this question is quite irrelevant.) The *mukhtār* protests again, and Lawrence calls the *vakil* to order once more, but by no means for the last time.

The *vakil* tries to make capital out of the fact that the appellants made their complaint before the other side and argues that the complaint against his clients was merely lodged in order to weaken the force of the original complaint—a device much loved by Indian litigants. The *mukhtār* explains the delay by the fact that E and F were so badly injured that they had to be carried on a charpoy to the police-station. Both the *vakil* and the *mukhtār* dwell at great length on inconsistencies in the evidence about such points as whether someone was looking north or south when he did a certain thing, and similar infinitely unimportant details; and both endeavour to show that the witnesses are old enemies of the persons against whom they have given evidence. How often has Lawrence heard these same old arguments before!

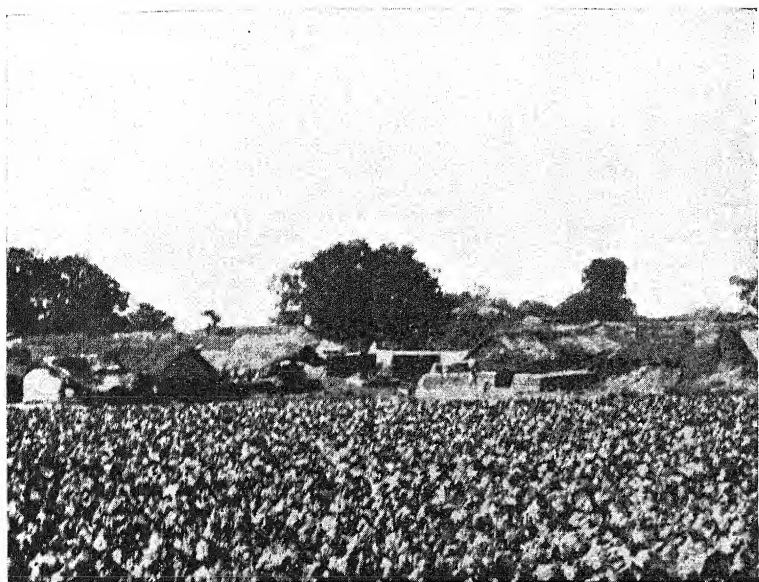
The oral evidence indeed on both sides is equally strong or weak, and if Lawrence had to decide on that basis alone the classic method of counting the flies on the ceiling and allowing or rejecting the appeal according to whether the number is odd or even would be as good as any. Lawrence, however, has what he considers a better method. Placing no reliance on the oral evidence of either side, he looks to see what facts are indisputable and what inference can be drawn from them. In the present case there is the medical report. From the number and nature of the injuries received by the two parties it is clear that the appellants' side must have been

the aggressors, and on that ground Lawrence decides against them. In one respect, however, Lawrence decides in their favour. In fixing the amount of the fines the magistrates, as so often happens, have apparently not realised that a rupee is a vastly larger sum for the accused persons than for themselves—at any rate Rs50 is quite beyond the means of any of the appellants, and Lawrence reduces each fine to Rs10. The appellants, who have been on bail, are placed under arrest; and a couple of constables tie a rope round their waists and lead them off.

By now it is well past tiffin-time, and Lawrence rises with relief at the prospect of a short interval of peace and quiet.

When he returns to court he is wondering whether he will be able to get through all his appeals, but a welcome surprise awaits him. In the remaining criminal case, in which A had been convicted of enticing B's wife away, the parties have come to an agreement, A keeping the woman but paying B some compensation for his loss—a wife, you see, having a marketable value, just like any other property. This is one of those cases that may be compounded. So Lawrence acquits A and passes on to his next case.

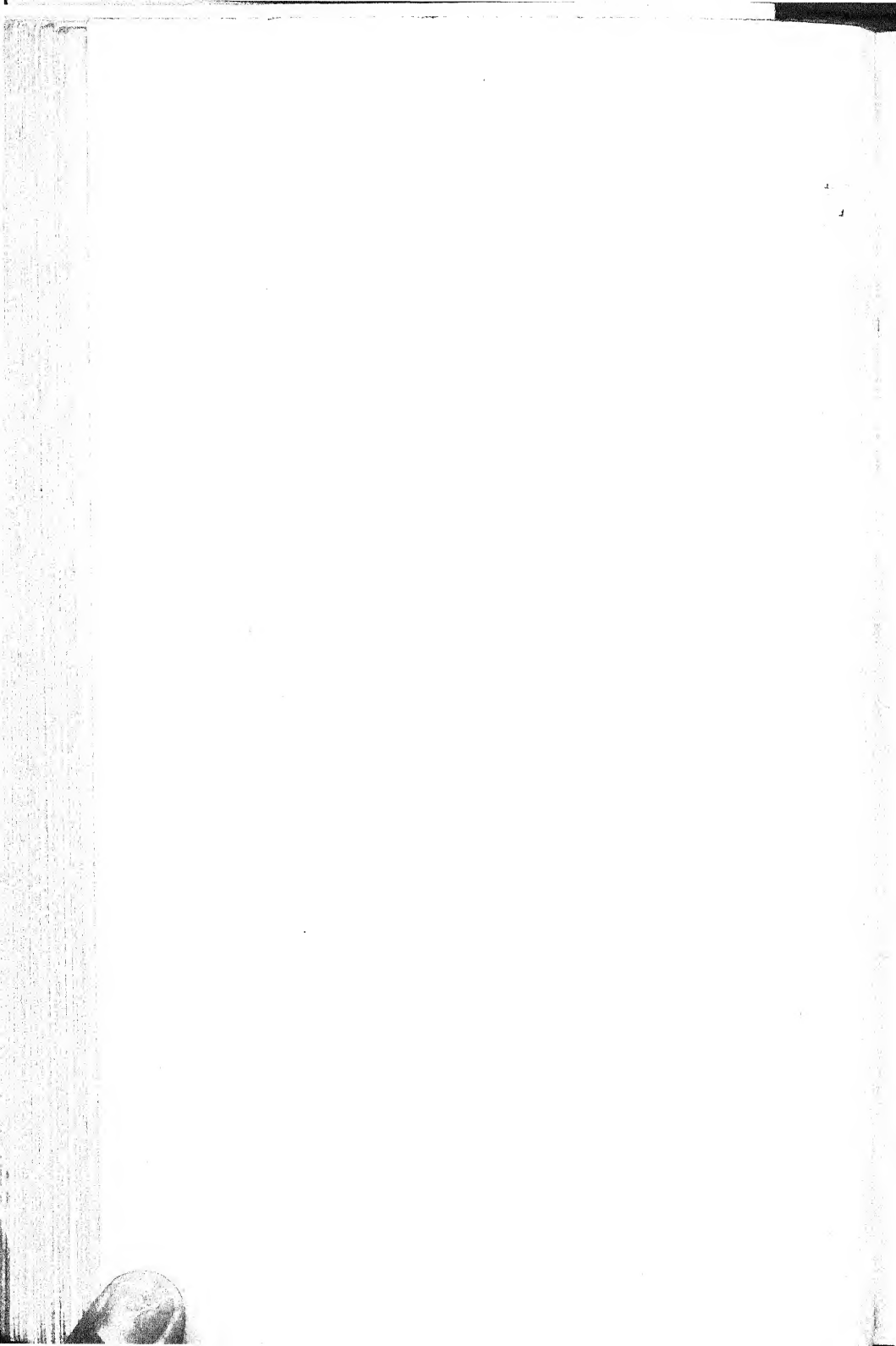
This is a revenue appeal. The appellant is a tenant whose ejectment has been ordered by the *tabhsildār* on the ground that he had failed to pay arrears of rent within the time required by a notice issued from the court. The tenant had actually appeared before the *tabhsildār* and proffered the money the day after the expiry of the notice, but the *tabhsildār* had already ordered his ejectment. Lawrence ascertains that the tenant has always paid his rent regularly with this one exception, and that on this occasion the crops, out of the proceeds of which the rent would have been paid, had been severely damaged by fire on the threshing-floor. After receiving the notice the tenant had borrowed money from a *banya*, but carelessly had brought it to the *tabhsildār* a day too late. About the legality of the *tabhsildār*'s order there can be no doubt, but Lawrence prefers justice to legality and considers ejectment a harsh penalty for mere carelessness. So he gets the tenant to deposit the rent in court, and after warning him not to be so careless again reinstates him in his tenancy. Mentally he prays that there may be no second appeal—the next court might pay more regard to law.



TOBACCO BORDERING VILLAGE HOUSES



SUGAR-CANE



The last case concerns an entry in a *patwāri's* papers. A man, who is described in them merely as a sub-tenant, claims to be the tenant-in-chief and consequently a statutory tenant with the right of life-occupancy, provided that he behaves like a good tenant. The man who is actually entered as the tenant-in-chief is, according to the claimant, merely the zemindar's puppet, and has never really been in possession at all. The sub-divisional officer found in the claimant's favour and the zemindar has appealed against the decision, but Lawrence dismisses the appeal without hesitation.

That brings Lawrence to the end of his prescribed court work, but before he can leave he has to attend to a few urgent papers and hear a few petitions from late-comers.

Soon he exchanges the law-court for the tennis-court, and when stern duty pursues him even there in the shape of a telegram from the Director of Statistics demanding the immediate despatch of form XYZ he continues his game scarcely more perturbed than was Drake at his bowls by the news of the Armada.

When he returns to his bungalow Lawrence finds a fresh dollop of files from his office and a few still left from the day before. Some are labelled 'immediate' or 'urgent' and receive Lawrence's first attention; others can wait indefinitely, and the stodgiest of these he puts aside for disposal on the next holiday, if he can spare no time for them before.

"Dinner is ready," announces the *khidmatgār*; and unless a catastrophe occurs Lawrence's work is done for the day.

. . . . .

And while Lawrence is at rest let us have a look at the code of practical maxims which he has drawn up for himself. There are eight of them.

I. BE COURTEOUS AND TACTFUL. Remember that in India it does not matter so much what you do as how you do it, and that nowhere are the people more sensitive to a slight or more appreciative of a kind word or a friendly gesture. The contentedness of a district depends more on the behaviour of its officers than all the logical reasons in the world.



## IMPRESSIONS OF AN INDIAN CIVIL SERVANT

II. PRAISE AS WELL AS BLAME. Censure your subordinate when he does badly by all means, but do not forget to praise him when he does well. Censure may check his faults but praise will stimulate his virtues.

III. DO NOT THINK THAT YOURS IS THE ONLY WAY. When you arrive in your new district do not assume that your predecessor was an idiot because his methods were different from yours. Leave his arrangements alone for at least three months. Do not thrust your views on your subordinates. They will do far better if allowed to develop their own. There are many ways of effecting the same thing, and yours is not the only way.

IV. REMEMBER THE HUMAN ELEMENT. To be successful a scheme must be not only good in itself but within the comprehension and power of those who have to work it. An elaborate machine cannot be run by an unskilled mechanic. So when you make your plans, remember the kind of men who will have to carry them out. Do not credit the Rs5 man with a Rs1000 brain.

V. GET THINGS DONE. Do not imagine that your orders will carry themselves out. When you have given the order you have only just begun. Call for a compliance report if necessary. If that is not enough, give the slacker no peace till he realizes that compliance with the original order will mean less trouble. Avoid too many general orders. Your subordinates will not remember them, and you will not have the time to enforce them.

VI. DO NOT DO OTHER PEOPLE'S WORK. Do not pat yourself on the back for doing everybody else's work because you can do it so much better yourself. You will find you have no time left for your own. Your job is to make your subordinates work and not do their work for them. Why should you get a superior officer's pay for doing a subordinate's work?

VII. KEEP THE RULES AS A RULE. Though great men are not the slaves of rules the mere breaking of rules does not constitute

#### ADMINISTRATION OF AN INDIAN DISTRICT

greatness. The greatness consists in knowing when to break them. To break a rule unnecessarily is to cause unnecessary trouble for yourself and others.

VIII. HAVE A SENSE OF HUMOUR. This above all things. Nowhere do you need the saving grace so much. If superior Authority directs you to do what you consider moonshine, if your plans have the contrary effect to what you intended, if the worst motives are attributed to your finest deeds, laugh. If you do not, you will go mad.

## CHAPTER IV

### INSPECTIONS

The Jail—The Treasury—The Collectorate—City-houses—  
A Police-station—A *Tahsil*—Effects of a Hail-storm—A  
Town, including a Branch Hospital and a Veterinary  
Hospital—A Village, including a *Panchayat*, School, Pound,  
and Shops for Fireworks, Liquor, Drugs and Opium—  
A *Patwāri*

INSPECTIONS form a most important part of the duties of a district officer. His main objects in making inspections are (a) to satisfy himself that his subordinate officers, the public bodies, and to some extent officers of other Government departments, are performing their duties properly; (b) to ascertain whether the holders of various kinds of licences are complying with the rules; (c) to acquaint himself with local conditions.

Inspections at headquarters are made throughout the year; the jail and the treasury, for instance, being inspected once a month, but the season most prolific of inspections is the period of two months or so in the cold weather which the district officer spends on tour.

Inspecting officers have their own little ways. Some subject work and officers to a microscopic examination for the detection of even the tiniest flaws, others are more on the look-out for special virtues, others are of opinion that no methods can be right except their own; some indulge in devastating criticism, others make suggestions intended to be helpful.

The district officer, not having risen from the ranks, is often handicapped by the fact that he is inspecting work with which he has no direct acquaintance and which is far more familiar to the inspected official than himself. The inspectee takes full advantage of the situation, and is ever ready to obscure the points at issue with the thickest clouds of dust.

The inspecting officer's work is not finished with the perform-

ance of his inspection and the recording of his note. The most difficult part of his task remains. He must see that effect is given to his remarks. Otherwise his note will serve no purpose beyond helping to fill the inspection-book. The experienced inspecting officer therefore has a copy made of his note and sends extracts from it to all concerned for necessary action, and when he next inspects the same department or institution, the first thing that he does is to see whether his previous orders have been carried out.

And now let us leave generalities for particulars once more, and—with a reader's and an author's privilege, unseen—observe our old friend Lawrence on some of his many inspections. In this way more than any other we shall get a glimpse of the working of the district machinery.

But one word of warning. As we go our way we shall meet various officials. People like these represented are to be found in real life, but do not take the people I describe as typical. If, for instance, I show you an official who suffers from some weakness, I do not mean to imply that the same weakness characterizes all or most members of his class.

*The Jail.* It is 6.58 on a June morning, and four warders with a fifth a little in advance, all in full khaki uniform and armed with muskets, are standing expectantly in front of and at right angles to a massive door, built into a frowning circle of brick-wall fifteen feet high and without a single projection or opening to relieve the monotony. The warders, however, are unconscious of the grim background and their attention is focused on the road in front along which the *Barē Sāhib* may appear at any moment. A little on one side stand the jailor and the superintendent, or—as we should say in England—the governor of the jail, both Indians.

A figure with a topi and riding on a horse suddenly appears from round a bend. The warders slope their rifles. A moment later the warder in front shouts "Present arms!" The muskets click, and Julia does her usual shy. Lawrence salutes the guard and dismounts with as much dignity as Julia's bobbing permits. He greets the superintendent and the jailor. The warders' guard breaks off, and the jailor produces a key. The huge door, however, is not thrown open in its entirety but merely a little wicket-

gate. As soon as the party have passed in, the jailor locks the gate again. Lawrence has perforce to wait, for he is confronted by another wall and another locked door. On the left-hand between the two walls is the office-room, but Lawrence is not interested in that and stands waiting for the jailor to open the second door.

During this rather awkward pause let us leave Lawrence for a moment and proceed in imagination to the spot where a kite is hovering overhead and take a bird's-eye view of the interior of the place we are about to visit—from the ground level there will be too many walls to see far ahead. Roughly the outline of the walls beneath us is like that of a gigantic tyre wheel. The tyre consists of the space between the outer and the main inner walls, the hub consists of an open space with a wall and doors all round, while between the tyre and the hub are the wards in which the prisoners are kept, the walls between each ward forming, so to speak, spokes radiating from the hub.

At one place, however, the outer wall bulges to make room between it and the inner wall for a vegetable garden, and within the great bulge of the outer wall there is a smaller bulge of the inner wall, within which there stands out a sinister object, consisting of two tall iron posts united on top by a girder and protruding through a wooden platform. Each of the wards consists partly of an open courtyard and partly of a barrack. Right in the centre of the hub appears a circular roof through which smoke is issuing.

By now, however, Lawrence and the others have passed through the inner door, and we must hasten down to earth to join them.

They are proceeding along a broad uncovered passage which the superintendent has endeavoured to brighten by a few pathetic flower-beds on either side: and presently the party emerge in the central space which from above looked like the wheel's hub. Lawrence stops before the first door on the right; and when it is opened, it reveals a yard with a floor of bare earth and walls and barracks of the same drab colour save for the red tiles of the roof. On the wall near the door is painted in black letters 'Non-habituals'. In the open yard are thirty or forty men, some engaged in beating fibre out of long prickly aloe-leaves whose pungent-smelling juice is carried off by drains, and some in twist-

ing the fibre into ropes, but as Lawrence enters, a warder sounds a bell and all the men cease work and stand.

The sun is already warm, and the convicts have discarded their coarse cotton shirts and are clad merely in loin cloths. One man, standing apart, wears a red lozenge-shaped hat bearing the letters 'C.O.', which is short for 'Convict Overseer'. He has been chosen for good behaviour to assist the warders, and in consideration of his duties is awarded certain privileges. They are a docile-looking crowd, and outside these surroundings might pass as ordinary members of society but for one distinctive mark. Around the neck of each man is a wire ring holding a wooden ticket, four inches by two, on which is stamped certain figures. One set of figures represents the number of the section of the Act or code under which the wearer has been convicted, and another the date on which he is to be released.

As Lawrence passes along the lines of men, he notices one bearing the number '110', which means that the convict has been found under Section 110 of the Criminal Procedure Code to be a man who commits burglary or some other serious offence habitually. Lawrence stops and makes inquiries of his escort. "Why has this man been classified as non-habitual?"

"A prisoner is non-habitual when he has not been convicted before," replies the jailor suavely.

"How can a man be classed as non-habitual when he's been sent to jail under 110?" retorts Lawrence.

"The magistrate is responsible for the classification," interposes the superintendent.

"But when the classification is obviously wrong, you might bring it to the notice of the convicting magistrate or myself," says Lawrence, a little weary at having to point out the obvious so often.

"Take his ticket," says the superintendent to the jailor, by way of announcing that the necessary action will be taken. The ticket will be produced before Lawrence in the office when the time comes for writing his inspection note.

The ticket, to which the superintendent referred, was not the wooden ticket, but a cardboard one. Each man has a ticket of this kind allotted to him on which are entered the essential facts



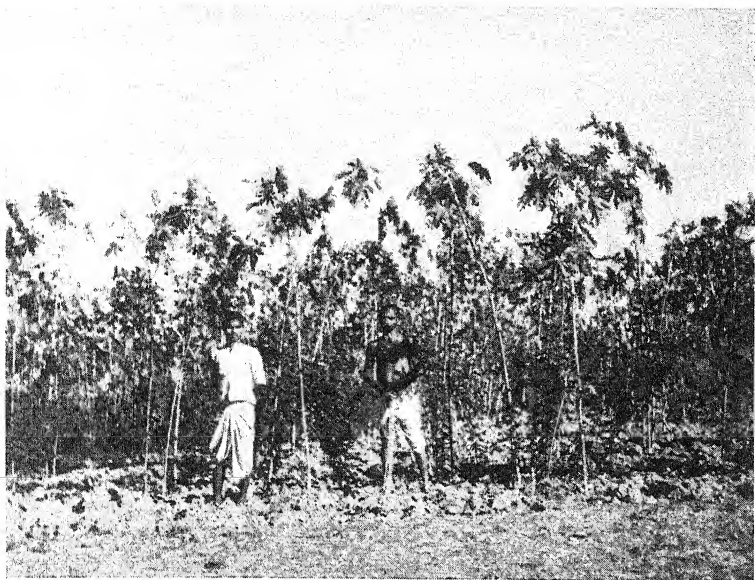
of his life in prison. Normally these tickets are kept in the office, but to-day they have been distributed among the prisoners for Lawrence's convenience. Lawrence examines two or three and notices that, as usual, each prisoner's weight has gone up since he came to jail, for the food supplied in jail is better and more plentiful than the ordinary prisoner can afford in his own home.

Before he leaves the ward Lawrence glances inside the barrack. Along each side of the bare walls is a row of what look like oblong earthen platforms erected on the floor. These are the beds. They are solid masonry with a clay-wash and must be uncommonly hard, but Lawrence has never heard anyone complain about them. Perhaps fatigue is a better soporific than a feather-bed. The place is spotlessly clean but so cheerless.

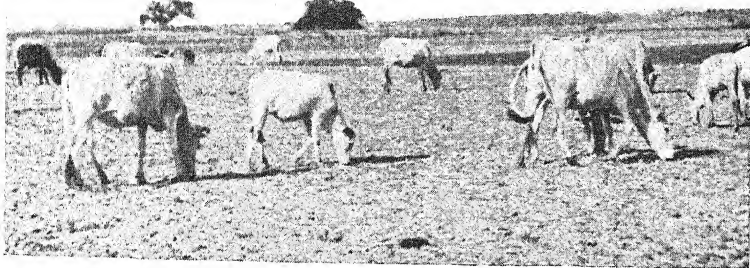
Lawrence passes on to the next ward. It is labelled 'Habituals'. Here the men are weaving *daris*. The loom is only a few inches above the ground, and for convenience a hole is dug in the ground in which the weaver sits. Lawrence watches one plying his shuttle. The pattern which is evolving is of a fantastic, gaudy kind. The superintendent points this out admiringly and informs Lawrence that the *dari* is being made for a local official. The weaver owes his skill to the training he has received during his frequent visits to jail. He appears to take as much pride in his art as if he were free, and evidently enjoys being selected for special commendation.

The next ward is also labelled 'Habituals'. It contains two barracks. The first is the smithy and in it a couple of men are busy forging fetters for their fellow-prisoners. In the other barrack a dozen men are grinding corn. The sweat is pouring down their bare chests, for theirs is the hardest of all jail tasks. One of the men has fetters on his legs. Lawrence asks the reason why. It is by way of punishment. The man repeatedly failed to do his quota of work and finally, when rebuked by the superintendent, became insolent and insubordinate.

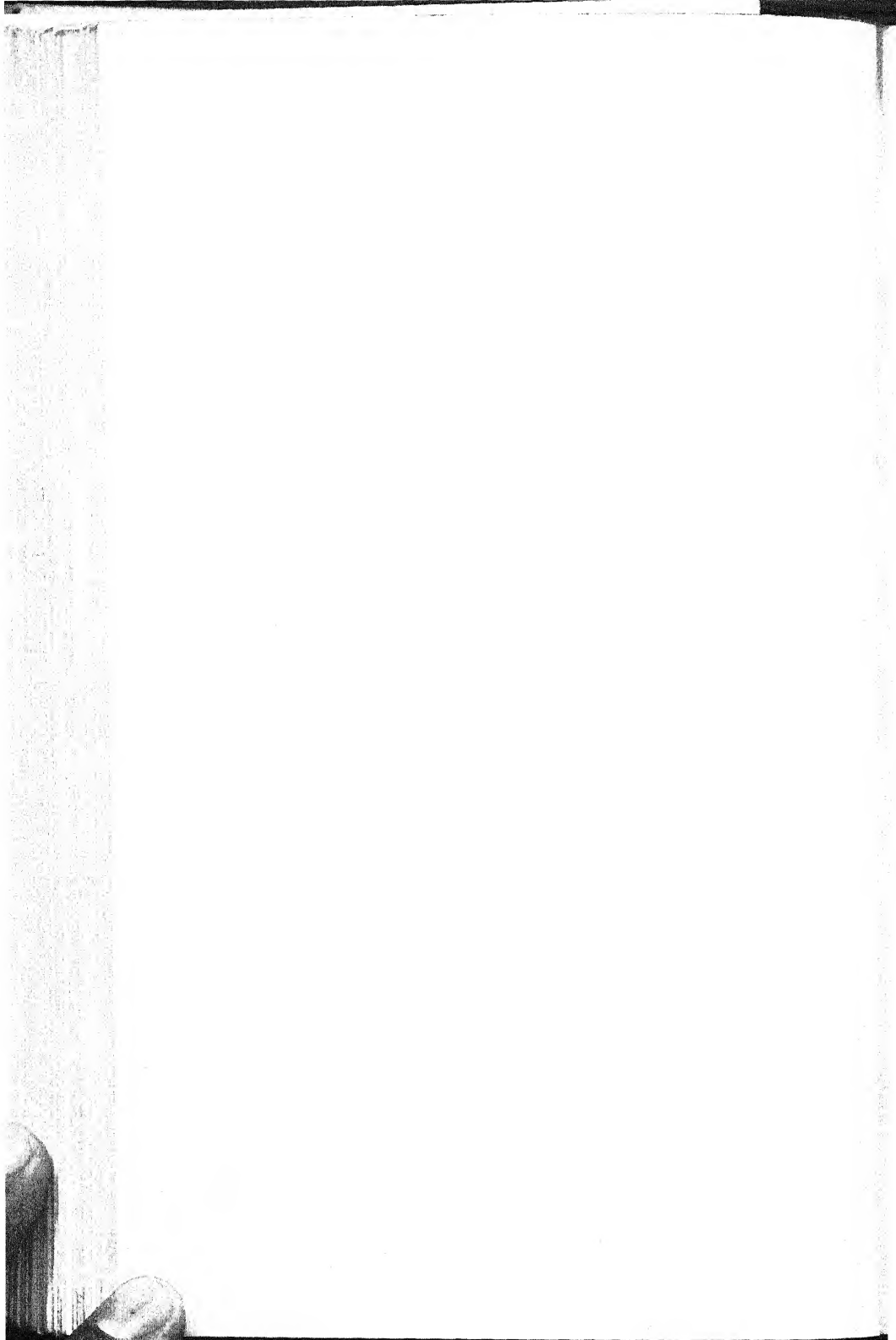
The next ward bears the name 'Undertrials'. (What would Mr. Herbert think of that?) Here there are seventy or eighty men, more than in any other ward, but unlike the men elsewhere they are all idle, for they are still awaiting their fate at the hands of magistrate or judge. They are drawn up in two lines. They



CASTOR OIL PLANTS



CATTLE GRAZING



wear their own clothes, but some wear fetters too—these are the men accused of murder, dacoity, or some other specially heinous offence. Lawrence glances at the cards which each holds before him. Some of the cards are upside down, and their illiterate holders are sharply informed of this by the jailor. What Lawrence is on the look-out for particularly is undue delay in the hearing of cases by magistrates, and whenever a man has been kept in jail for over a month without some obviously good reason Lawrence takes his card with a view to making inquiries from the magistrate. The men who have been here longest of all are awaiting their trial before the judge. Lawrence can issue no orders to him, but if he notices any special delay in a case after committal to the sessions, he takes the card so that he may bring this to the judge's notice. Lubrication of the official wheels is one of Lawrence's most important and most exacting duties.

It is not only the clothes and idleness that distinguish the 'undertrials' from the convicts. The convicts might be dumb men—for the most part, as Lawrence passes, they never utter a word, as if the iron of discipline had eaten into their souls. The 'undertrials', though not talkative, are less reticent, and quite a number speak to Lawrence as he goes along the line. One protests his innocence, another complains of the length of his trial, a third asks permission to send a petition to the court, and so on.

The next ward is a small one. It contains the 'juvenile undertrials'. There are four youths here. One, Lawrence notices, is an *Abēria*, a member of a criminal tribe. "Why," he asks, "is an *Abēria* put here?"

"Because he's under twenty," says the jailor.

"But the object of keeping youths separate is to save them from contamination. This youth must have been contaminated long ago, and will only contaminate the others."

"That's the rule," mumbles the jailor, half apologetically, half obstinately.

And even the superintendent is inclined to side with the jailor. Lawrence will have to put down his orders in writing and thus shoulder the responsibility of breaking the letter of the rule.

The next enclosure which Lawrence visits appears to be deserted. Instead of being in the yard the occupants are all inside

the building which bears the label 'Hospital'. As Lawrence enters it his nose is repelled by a strong smell of phenyle and his eyes oppressed by a dismal sight. There are about twenty beds, like those we have already seen, six of which are occupied. There are no mattresses, the pillows are hard and only an inch or so thick, and the bedding consists entirely of rough blankets. There is nothing at all to brighten the dreary walls and floors. What discomfort it would be to live in such surroundings, even if one were in the best of health! Three of the patients are suffering from leg-ulcers caused by fetters, one has malaria, the fifth was injured when resisting arrest, and the last has pneumonia. Lawrence feels helpless in the presence of such misery. What is wanted is the human touch, and no orders of his will create that. For relief he turns to a couple of old men who are officially swatting flies. They are members of the infirm gang, too old and weak to perform the ordinary jail tasks. One of them has a long white beard and looks as if he might have stepped out of a stained-glass window. Lawrence learns that he is the brains of a murderous gang of dacoits.

The next enclosure contains nothing to cheer Lawrence up. Here too no prisoners are to be seen in the yard, but only a police sentry standing in front of what look like six iron cages. Four of the cages are empty. In each of the other two a man is standing, grasping a bar with both hands and staring out, the picture of despair. These are the condemned cells. One of the men is to be hanged to-morrow morning. He begs Lawrence to see that his fields pass to his son. Lawrence promises that this shall be done, and the doomed wretch seems resigned. The other man says nothing but folds his hands in supplication. Lawrence grinds his teeth and goes along the path which those two others will so soon have to tread. This leads him to an enclosed space. To the superintendent and the jailor it seems quite empty save for an erection in the middle, but Lawrence in imagination sees lining the walls the police guard armed with muskets and on the scaffold the ghosts of the poor wretches whom in his young days he saw launched to eternity.

The superintendent breaks in upon Lawrence's reverie. "There's nothing here for you to see." The spell is broken.

We pass from the gloomiest to the brightest place in the jail, the vegetable-garden, and except for the high walls one might imagine oneself in some fertile village field.

As Lawrence returns to the hub from which he started, he remembers that he failed to see one thing, the smoking building at the centre. Over an enormous fire half a dozen men are baking huge *chipātis* which they divide up with iron rings. The men are Brahmins, for even in jail caste rules must be observed, and for this reason Lawrence is careful not to pollute any of the *chipātis* with his touch.

A little distance from the kitchen two men are sitting on the ground, doing nothing and looking an absolute blank. One is a 'civil' prisoner who has been brought here by debt: the other could not pay his fine. They rise as Lawrence approaches, and he asks them whether they would not prefer to do some work and earn money or the right to a larger ration, but he knows before he hears the answer that it will be "No."

Before he writes his inspection note Lawrence leaves the main jail and proceeds to an annexe a little way beyond. This is the women's jail, and in place of the hundreds of occupants of the men's jail, here there are only four, for even in crime Indian women hardly count. One of the women has a baby with her. All are kept in one room under the charge of a hag-like wardress. As they stop winding their thread and stand up, they hang their heads, as if more ashamed of being forced to submit to the gaze of a strange man than of what has brought them here.

In his note Lawrence suggests that the lives of the prisoners might be brightened in some way. How deadening it all is! How do the prisoners spend their leisure? They have not even any books. No wonder that so many crimes are planned in jail.

Lawrence has hardly reached his bungalow when a *dālī* of vegetables arrives from the jail. To refuse it would be churlish.

*The Treasury.* It is March 31, a red-letter day for Indian officialdom, for this is the last day of the financial year, and it will witness frantic last-minute efforts to spend grants that will otherwise lapse. But what concerns us at present is that it is one of the two days in the year when the collector has to count not



merely the cash—that has to be done once a month—but also the stamps. Lawrence is at work in his court-room, awaiting the summons, and presently a *chaprāsī* arrives and announces that all is ready. Lawrence sets off with a sinking heart to endure as tedious a couple of hours as ever falls to his lot.

At the entrance to the treasury he is received by the treasury officer and the treasurer's agent, while the police sentry presents arms (Lawrence arrives in an atmosphere of 'Present arms'). The door consists of a ponderous iron grating and is fitted with two padlocks of which one key remains with the treasurer or his agent and the other with the treasury officer, so that it cannot be opened except in the presence of both.

The treasury officer accompanies Lawrence inside the treasury, but the treasurer's agent stays outside to receive or pay money, as the case may be. The treasury-room is small and dark and stuffy, the only apertures consisting of the door and a little grated window. It is made for security, not comfort. The walls are lined with massive iron safes and on the floor there are several large, stout chests.

A clerk lays a register upon the table at which Lawrence sits. It shows that apart from the currency chest, to which we will come later, the treasury contains nearly three lakhs of rupees (about £22,500), most of it in notes or 'whole rupees', as rupee coins are styled.

First Lawrence gives his attention to the notes. There is one for Rs1,000 and two for Rs500 and there are thousands of notes varying from Rs100 to Rs1, though before the Great War no note was worth less than Rs5. The Rs100 notes must be counted by Lawrence one by one, but for the other notes Lawrence employs a more cursory method—he has not time to be more thorough. Those notes which have never been issued to the public are bound together in books from which they can be torn, but the rest are tied in bundles. Lawrence first assumes that the books and bundles contain the notes which they purport to and compares the total so obtained with the entries in the register. Then he hastily glances through the notes of a few books to see that no numbers are missing in the series. After that he examines the bundles. These consist mostly of a hundred notes. Some of them are

divided into smaller bundles which make check easier, but the smaller notes are not so treated. Lawrence, however, does not attempt the tedious task of counting the hundred notes separately. Instead he turns back a few, the number of which he keeps secret, and gets a clerk, who aided by frequent application of his finger to his tongue is far quicker than Lawrence at the game, to count the rest in the bundle, and a little addition sum shows whether the total is correct.

Next come the coins. First the rupees. There are over 150 bags of them, each containing 1,000 rupees. The bags are of open net-work, so that the nature of the contents can be seen from outside. There is not room for all the bags in one safe. So they are distributed between two. Even so the bags have to be piled five high. Lawrence selects one bag and a man extracts it with an effort and drops, rather than puts, it on the ground. It weighs about 30 lb. avoirdupois. The treasurer's agent squats on the floor, opens the bag, and pours the contents out. Lawrence picks up a handful of the coins and counts them to himself. The agent assisted by a clerk heaps the rest of the coins in piles of twenty. The piles grow steadily till there are forty-eight of them. The agent counts the odd coins left. "Twenty-three," he announces as the number held by Lawrence. Lawrence nods assent and hands back the coins, but the agent takes no risk and recounts them before he adds them to his piles.

The agent, however, does not replace the coins in the bags at once. Instead he puts them in the pan of a huge pair of scales. Lawrence then selects others bags and their contents are weighed, each in turn, against the thousand rupees already counted. In no case is the difference in weight more than three rupees, so all the bags are passed, for up to that weight the difference can be accounted for by wear and tear.

Then come all sorts of coins of lower value, made of silver, nickel, or copper. Lawrence checks a few bags of silver and nickel coins, but the copper coins he takes for granted, merely opening one of the gunny bags, in which they are kept, to satisfy himself that the contents are really coins and not iron filings. The smallest coin of all is a pie, which is worth about a third of a farthing. A single bag of these coins contains 9,600 coins, of which the total

value is only Rs50; and Lawrence would rather risk having to pay their value than count them or wait long enough for someone else to do so.

Lawrence next examines various kinds of rupees marked for withdrawal from circulation. Some are light-weight, others are defaced, others belong to the years 1835 or 1840. What the objection is to the last kind Lawrence could never discover. Can it be that they contain too much silver?

Even this does not exhaust the coins. For there remains what is known as the currency chest; which surely has been named on the principle of *lucus a non lucendo*, for this chest contains notes and coins which cannot be made current without the orders of superior authority. The total value is over two lakhs, but Lawrence soon disposes of the lot, for it is made up entirely of notes and 'whole rupees', and the notes are all in books and the chest has not been opened since his last inspection a month ago.

Now for the most wearisome part of all—the stamps. To the layman 'stamps' mean postage-stamps, and those only of a few denominations, but to one who is unfortunate enough to have to inspect an Indian treasury, it means something vastly different. There are stamps for postage, for court-fees, for official copies of judgments and other documents, for deeds, for bills of exchange and for lawyers' certificates; and under most of these heads there are endless sorts and denominations. Take postage for instance. There is ordinary postage, postage on Government service, postage for the air-mail, 'labels' as adhesive stamps are called, postcards and reply postcards, registered and unregistered envelopes of all shapes and sizes. Luckily Lawrence is required to count only 10 per cent. Stamps in constant demand are kept in scores of sheets, others are so rarely needed that only one or two specimens are kept which have grown soiled with age and are familiar to Lawrence as old enemies. Some stamps meant for documents are printed on sheets of paper and these for convenience sake are divided into hundreds by placing the stamp-end of the paper different ways for alternate lots. These Lawrence counts in the same way as the notes, turning back a few and getting a clerk to count the balance. So he wades through one register after another, calling out each denomination that he desires to be produced.

At last the stamps are done and Lawrence rises to inspect the opium which is kept in the treasury for security. First he peers into a chest, where twenty cakes are packed, each weighing a seer (about 2 lb.) and looking like a monstrous caramel wrapped in grease-paper. As Lawrence handles one or two, he becomes more conscious of the rather sickening smell which he always associates with the treasury. Then a *chaprasī* lifts a lid from a pit in the floor and, letting himself down, brings out another maund or so of cakes for Lawrence's inspection.

That ends the 'double-lock'. But Lawrence still has to count the non-postage stamps under 'single-lock' which have been issued to the clerk for sale to the public. And after that the *nāzīr*, who keeps the petty cash of the collector's office, appears, and Lawrence proceeds to check his balance of cash and stamps.

Finally Lawrence signs various statements, embodying the results of his inspection. Of course he has not found a single shortage—that is the justification of the system. Then he looks anxiously around to see whether anyone else has a register to produce. No, thank goodness! He is free!

*The Collectorate.* To-day we will accompany Lawrence on a tour of his office, not on his annual inspection, for that is a thorough business occupying several days, but on a general look-round which he makes from time to time.

Before entering the building Lawrence walks around the spacious but unattractive compound, with no adornment except a few large trees. On one side there are rows of pitches for the satellites of the courts. Some of the pitches are bare plots of earth, most of them, however, have a wooden platform for the occupant to sit on, while the more magnificent ones boast a temporary shed of wooden posts and corrugated iron roof. Some of the occupants are lawyers of various grades—*mukhtārs*, pleaders, *vakils*, and even one or two full-fledged barristers: others are petition-writers who for a few annas turn the villager's unsophisticated tale into legal jargon; others are stamp vendors, licensed to sell, not postage-stamps but stamps required for judicial and legal purposes. The lawyers call their pitches 'chambers' and sit on chairs, but for all that many of them are hardly better off than the humbler occu-

pants of the other pitches. Around the pitches are knots of litigants and witnesses, prepared to make a day of it. Other groups are scattered all over the compound, but specially under the shade of the trees. Under one tree squats a group of men, ready, so malicious rumour says, to give evidence for anyone who will pay for it. There is nothing, however, to detain Lawrence in the compound to-day beyond a few pot-holes in the roads, and after telling the *nāzir* to arrange for their repair, he goes inside the building.

But before following him let us have a glance at the building from outside. It is long, one-storied, two rooms deep. The roof is flat and the walls are made of white-plastered brick. A verandah runs all round with frequent doors opening into it, and there are lofty porches to afford protection against sun and rain. There is no apparent architectural design, and you could add a bit or take a bit away without altering the general effect.

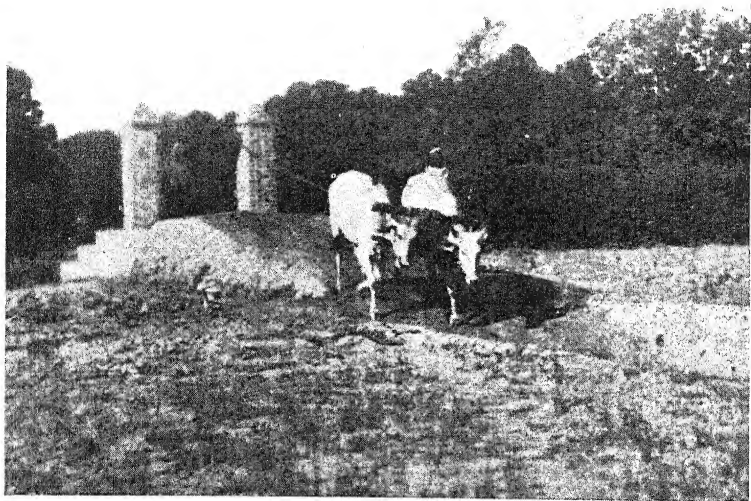
In the compound are other smaller buildings of the same dull, mass-production type. These are the offices of the superintendent of police, the special manager of the Court of Wards, and the combined police-guard quarters and prisoners' lock-up, not to mention numerous out-houses—all dumped down anyhow, a higgledy-piggledy collection.

By the time we have entered the main building, Lawrence has reached the English office. Here are the chief clerks, for the most important matters are now dealt with in English. They are seated at a long table and before each clerk is a jumble of papers. All seem deeply engrossed in their work—abnormally so, thinks Lawrence cynically, as he considers how long it usually takes him to get the simplest order carried out. He glances at one or two files to see that they have not been left untouched unduly long according to Indian standards and then departs.

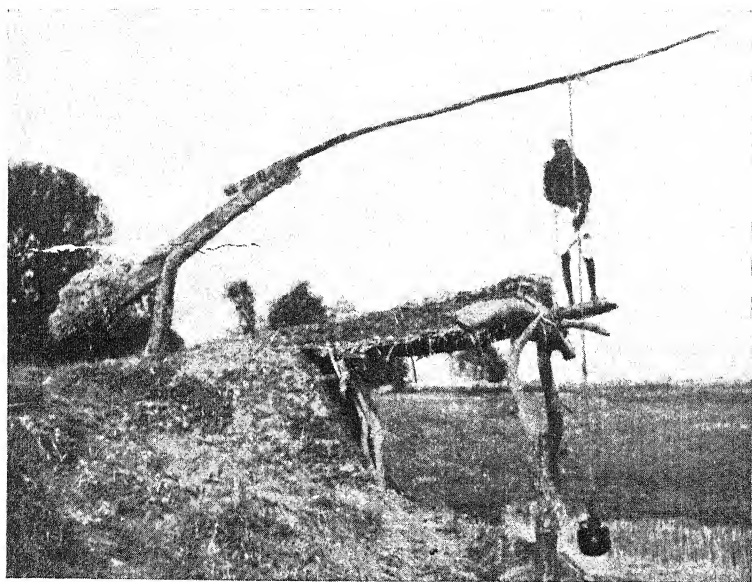
Meanwhile the office superintendent, the chief clerk of all, has appeared from his little private room, ingratiating and anxious. He attaches himself to Lawrence for the rest of his inspection, ready to produce the appropriate reply whenever a subordinate clerk's imagination proves unequal to the task.

Adjoining is the 'English record room' where English non-judicial records are kept. Lawrence opens the register at random



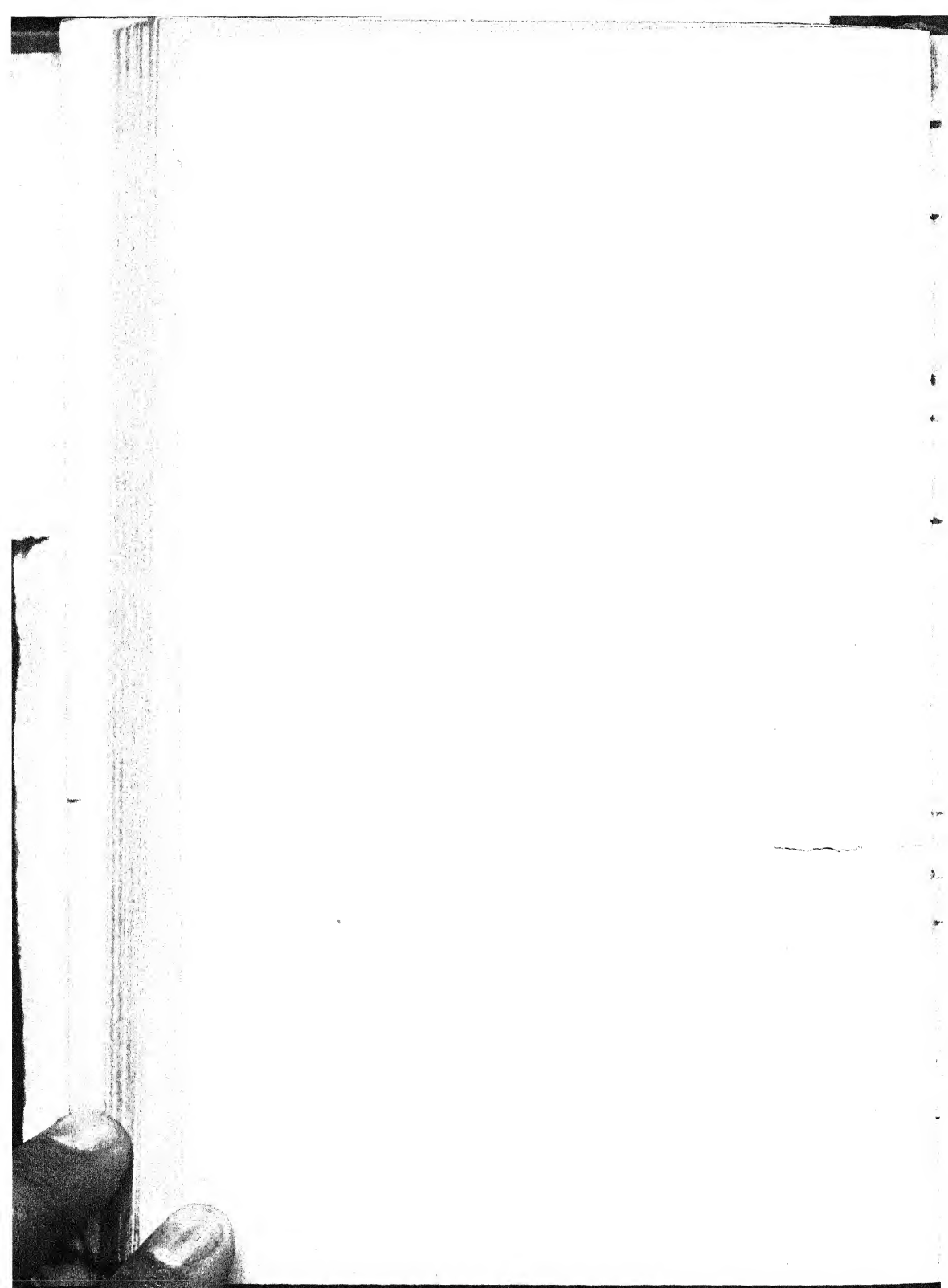


BULLOCKS DRAWING WATER FROM A WELL



THE DHENKLI METHOD OF RAISING WATER





and asks the clerk to bring a few records shown therein—it is one thing to keep records, and quite another to be able to find straight away any that happens to be wanted. The clerk is agitated and fumbles a little, but complies with reasonable promptitude, and Lawrence passes on to the vernacular room.

The arrangement is much the same as in the English office, but some of the lower clerks are sitting on mats instead of chairs. The mats are covered with red and black blots, caused by constant shaking of pens that have been dipped too deep. (Never trust an Indian clerk with a pen near a carpet that you value!)

Then Lawrence looks into two small rooms. The first is occupied by the *nāzir* who is in control of the collectorate building and the menial staff and keeps a small sum for the payment of petty day-to-day items, and in the last two respects is to the office much what a bearer is to a private household; and the second by the headquarters *kānūngo* whose duty it is to supervise the subordinate staff for the preparation of the land records—the *patwārīs* and the *kānūngos*—only, as he spends nearly all his working hours in his own room, he sees more of the records than the staff.

Next Lawrence makes his way along the verandah to the 'revenue record room', i.e. the room where judicial files of revenue courts, land records and settlement papers are kept, but before he can reach it he has to pass through a long ante-room. Here are seated a host of record-devotees—copyists making copies in English or Urdu or Hindi with pen or typewriter, partition clerks tracing maps, 'arrangers' putting records into order, 'weederers' sorting out old papers for destruction, 'lifters' bringing such records as have been requisitioned. At a table near the entrance to the record room itself is posted, Cerberus-like, the keeper who is in general charge. There is no other way into the room, and all strangers are jealously excluded from this storehouse of precious papers, which no wealth may purchase—at least not openly. Before penetrating to the inner sanctum Lawrence asks the reason for delay in the preparation of several copies. The reasons come out pat. In one instance the applicant has not furnished full particulars, in another the document to be copied is so voluminous that it is being done by instalments so as not to hold

up other copies, and so on. There always are good reasons, so long as you do not probe too deep.

At last Lawrence comes to the record room itself. It is a gloomy place, lit only by a skylight—for windows might let in intruders. All round the walls and down the centre are racks, one above another, covered with bundles wrapped in cloth of distinctive colours. A couple of clerks are examining bundles, the papers held close up to their eyes. It is a wonder that, like moles, they don't lose their sight altogether. Lawrence opens one or two bundles and compares the contents with the list on top.

There is still another record room to visit—for in the land of babuism records are venerated and assume an importance almost greater than the things that they record. This is the 'criminal record room' where are preserved the records of the criminal courts. Here everything is on a smaller scale, but the gloom is as intense.

Lawrence looks at his watch. He must hurry back if he is to get through all his work to-day, but on the way he finds time to peep into a deputy magistrate's court. A man is being tried for murder. In front of the railings of the dais are crowded together police, *vakīls*, a witness and spectators. The *pēshkār* is recording the evidence in Urdu, droning as he writes, while the magistrate with his nose glued to his paper is making an English translation. The *vakīl* is asking hair-splitting questions and the witness is being obstructive, but the magistrate is too busy writing to interfere. Lawrence contrasts the scene mentally with the drama and dignity of an English court. The deputy magistrate looks up for a moment and notices Lawrence at the door and half-begins to rise. Lawrence motions to him to be seated. The deputy magistrate commences to assert himself, and speaks sternly to the witness.

Lawrence passes on, and as the *chik* of his court-room door falls behind him, you can almost hear the wheels of babuism outside slow down to their normal pace.

*City houses.* This morning Lawrence has to inspect two houses in the city which are the subjects of dispute in appeals pending before him. Soon after daybreak he mounts Julia and starts off accompanied by the municipal sub-overseer who has come on a

## INSPECTIONS

bicycle to show him the way. After a mile or so the airy bungalows, the spacious compounds, the open spaces and the peaceful roads of Civil Lines give way to the city with its rows of ramshackle buildings and roads congested with cattle, pedestrians, and every variety of wheeled traffic.

After a while the sub-overseer turns to the left and guides Lawrence along a labyrinth of narrow, winding alleys. Finally he reaches a particularly narrow one, made still narrower by numerous *chabūtras* in front of the houses. It is one of these *chabūtras* which Lawrence has come to inspect to-day.

According to the municipal authorities the appellant's *chabūtra* constitutes an encroachment on the public road, and a map has been produced in support of this. The appellant on the other hand maintains that a *kachcha chabūtra* (i.e., one made of earth) has existed here from time immemorial and that all he has done is to make it *pukka* (i.e., replace the earth with bricks). The process is only too familiar to Lawrence. If it is not nipped in the bud the next stage will be the erection of a temporary shed upon the *chabūtra*, and finally the house itself will be extended over the place where the *chabūtra* once stood. No doubt the municipal authorities should have interfered years ago as soon as the first innocent-looking heap of earth began to appear in front of the house, but neither that consideration nor the fact that other offenders seem to have been left alone prevents Lawrence from unhesitatingly upholding the Board's order for the demolition of the *chabūtra*.

He rides on to the next place to be inspected. This time the municipal board has given permission to A to add a storey to his house, and his neighbour B has objected on the ground that it would shut off light and air from his house. Waiting to receive Lawrence are A and B with their *vakils* and a handful of spectators to see the fun. The alley in question is so narrow and the houses so high that it is hardly possible to shut off any more light or air from most of B's house, and it does not take Lawrence long to come to the conclusion that the objection has merely been reduced to this form to bring it within the four corners of the law.

Presently A and B begin to argue with each other. Lawrence

does not interfere but keeps his ears open: and sure enough B soon gets so heated that he loses all self-control and blurts out the real ground of his objection. "You'll rob my house of all privacy," he shrieks. "Where are my women to go? I shall be utterly disgraced."

Yes, that is the real truth. At present B's house overlooks A's, but if A gets his way his house will overlook B's.

"It's a matter for the civil court," says Lawrence, breaking in and addressing B. "I can't help you."

A is jubilant, B protests, Lawrence rides off and A and B start their wordy battle once more, the sound of which continues to reach Lawrence's ears long after he has departed, for the volume is *fortissimo crescendo*.

*A Police-station.* The inspections, on which we have hitherto accompanied Lawrence, have been at headquarters. The remaining inspections will be made in camp. This morning Lawrence has announced his intention of visiting the police-station. The officer in charge had inquired yesterday what time he might expect Lawrence at the station, but Lawrence had gently brushed the suggestion aside and told him to be at his camp by 7.15, for one of the things which he wishes to see is whether the sub-inspector, who is growing portly, is still capable of riding a horse.

Lawrence, having mounted, observes out of the corner of his eye a man firmly holding the horse's head while the sub-inspector scrambles into the saddle. Having arrived at the road, Lawrence puts Snowball into a canter on the earthen sidetrack. The sub-inspector tries to do the same, but his horse is of a different mind and persists in breaking into a gallop. The sub-inspector makes frantic efforts to keep a respectful distance behind the *Barē Sāhib*, but even thirteen stone tugging at the fiercest of bits is insufficient to restrain the ardour of the sub-inspector's steed and suddenly the sub-inspector flashes by with yards of turban streaming in the breeze.

The station officer arrives an easy first at the police-station, but fortunately there is an assistant to receive Lawrence and take control of the situation till the station officer has recovered his turban and mental balance.

## INSPECTIONS

Drawn up in front of the police-station are the assistant sub-inspector, the head constable, and seven constables, all dressed in khaki with red turbans. Five constables, Lawrence learns, are absent. Two are serving summonses, two are checking the movements of registered criminals, and one has gone to fetch the monthly pay of the staff.

Lawrence passes through the gateway into a courtyard, round which are located the barracks, the store-room and armoury, the office and the lock-ups. The building is a new one and constructed of solid brick in contrast to some of the dilapidated buildings which Lawrence has seen elsewhere. He makes a hasty survey, examining the interior of the barrels of the muskets to see that they are free from rust, testing the strength of the doors of the lock-ups, satisfying himself that the cells contain no projection from which a turban could be hung by a prisoner bent on suicide, noticing that the lock-up for women has a metal screen in front of the lower part of the bars to ensure privacy and discovering that most of the prisoners' blankets are worn threadbare.

Then he takes his seat in the office for the purpose of his main task, that of examining the records of the police administration during the last year. To help him the station officer has had prepared a detailed statement showing the number of offences of each kind reported and the results of investigation and trial. According to the police register the number of reports has fallen from 190 to 170 compared with the previous year, but Lawrence notices that the superintendent of police, who has made a far more thorough inspection than Lawrence will have time to make, is of opinion that there has been concealment of crime, that is to say that the police have failed to record some reports in order to show that their circle is in a better state than it really is.

Lawrence then looks into the 'heinous' crime. This consists of three murders and two dacoities. One of the murders is of a kind all too common—that of a woman throwing herself into a well with her baby after a quarrel with her husband. The other two are distinctly interesting. The alleged facts in the first case were that a gang had killed a member of another gang in pursuance of a village feud. The Indian judge had acquitted all the accused, and the other gang thereupon openly proclaimed in the



village that if the judge had acquitted their enemies they had not, and they proceeded to make up for what they considered the judge's omission. The second gang were duly prosecuted, but fortunately for them they came before the same judge and were also acquitted.

In the first dacoity the victim was a *banya* and as the dacoits made a point of burning all his account books and deeds, the local villagers, his debtors, were suspected of being the offenders, but the *banya* was far too unpopular for any evidence to be procured. In the second dacoity the victim was a *patwārī*, and the value of the loot was said to have amounted to over a thousand rupees, though the *patwārī*'s official pay was only Rs15 a month.

But the class of crime to which Lawrence devotes most attention is burglary, for this accounts for nearly half the crime of the circle. There have been few convictions, but the station officer assures Lawrence that many of the offenders have been put away under 'section 110'. Lawrence then examines a rough plan which the head constable has prepared showing the places where the burglaries have occurred, notes the black spots, considers how far the action already taken has been effectual and suggests what still requires to be done.

Having analysed the crime Lawrence examines a multitude of other points—the supervision of registered criminals, the prevalence of communal tension, the grant of rewards to police and *chaukidars* for meritorious work and the general character of the station officer's administration. The results have been none too good, but, as the station officer points out, he has been here less than a year and Lawrence instead of trying to apportion the blame merely expresses the hope that when he comes next year he will find a marked improvement.

As Lawrence calls for Snowball, the station officer gives him an inquiring, almost an appealing look. Lawrence does not wish to torture the station officer unnecessarily or let him down before his men. "You needn't trouble to come to my camp, *Thānedār Sāhib*," he says.

"*Huzūr*," replies the station officer, with a grateful salute.

*A Tabsil.* This is the second of the three days set apart by

## INSPECTIONS

Lawrence for inspecting the *tabsil* which is the office of the *tabsildār* and the revenue headquarters of the sub-division. We did not accompany him on the first day, for that was ear-marked for an inspection of the sub-treasury and the building—features which resemble those we have already seen at the inspection of the collectorate. The *tabsil* indeed is to some extent the collectorate in miniature, the treasury, copying department, record rooms and *nāzir* of the collectorate all having their counterpart in the *tabsil*. But the *tabsil* has this distinctive characteristic that it is more executive and less legal and judicial than the collectorate, the *tabsildār*'s motto being 'Deeds, not words.'

The sun has hardly risen when a fierce-looking, big, grey-bearded Muslim on a spirited horse rides up to Lawrence's camp. This is the *tabsildār* himself. He is one of the old school. He knows little English or law, and does not bother about rules, but can be relied on to arrange anything from the erection of a hospital by the most miserly skinflint to the suppression of the most mischievous agitator. He rules with a rod of iron and as he arrives at the camp, everyone, even the *pēshkār*, gives him a ceremonial salaam. He is a striking contrast to his assistant, the *naib-tabsildār*, who has preferred to await Lawrence at the *tabsil*. The *naib* indeed considers himself as vastly superior to the *tabsildār* in all respects. He is a graduate, well-versed in the law and a stickler for the rules, and can speak English far more fluently than Lawrence can speak Urdu, but when it comes to action there is more power in the *tabsildār*'s little finger than in the whole of the *naib*'s body, mind and soul.

Arrived at the *tabsil*, Lawrence gives his first attention to the collection of the land revenue, the *tabsildār*'s primary duty. Though it is only the middle of February and six weeks still remain before the final date on which all the *kharif* revenue must be in, the *tabsildār* has realized nearly the whole demand and the balance consists mostly of money due from persons resident outside the *tabsil* area. In accordance with the rules the *naib-tabsildār* has prepared a list of landlords liable to default, so that early action may be taken against them as soon as each demand falls due, but under the present régime the list is naturally a short one. In spite of the promptness with which the revenue has been

paid, the number of coercive processes shown in the register is astonishingly low. Lawrence has received no complaints, and discreetly does not question the *tabšildār* about his methods. With regard to the collection of canal dues, i.e. the price of water supplied for irrigation, and of agricultural loans, the position is equally satisfactory.

Lawrence commends the *tabšildār*, who beams but appears less happy when Lawrence expresses a desire to see his court work, for this is not the *tabšildār's* strong point. His cases have not indeed been delayed, but the procedure is often of a nature to make a high court judge writhe with pain. And although most of his criminal cases have been dismissed, yet in not a single one has he prosecuted the complainant for bringing a false accusation or ordered him to pay compensation to the accused, which are the recognized ways of discouraging a practice which the air of India seems to breed. As for the revenue cases, Lawrence finds it difficult to make head or tail of most of them, for among other things the issues, which have to be framed at the beginning of the hearing and mainly determine whether a case is to be tried methodically or not, are terribly confused and display a blissful ignorance of the distinction between law and fact.

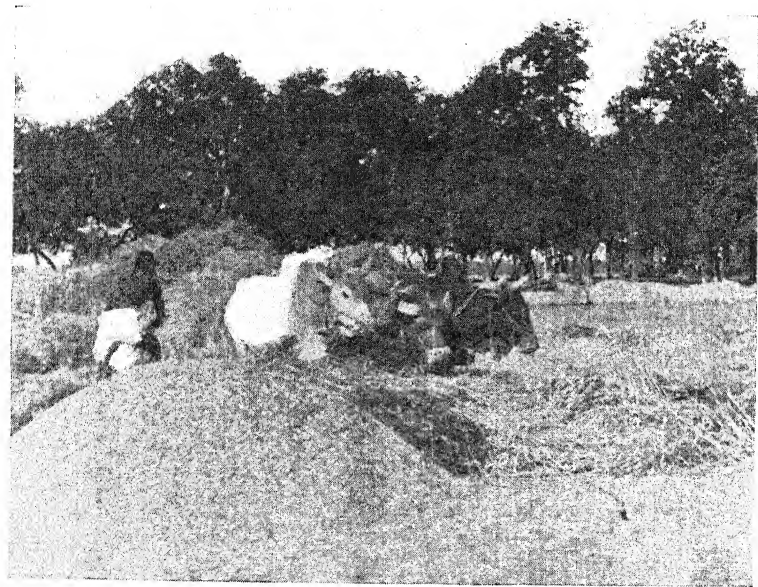
The *naib-nāzir* is the next on the mat. Lawrence has received complaints about the delay with which summonses are served from this *tabšil*, and as he suspects, finds that some of the process-servers are made to spend their time journeying from one end of the *tabšil* area to the other, while others—the *naib-nāzir's* favourites—live a life of leisure in the office.

The two bailiffs are then called. One observes his programme and keeps his work up to date; the other ignores his programme and, as a corollary, has large arrears; moreover he reports with suspicious frequency that he has been unable to find any property to be attached, which nearly always means either that he has been too lazy to look for any or, what is more likely, that it has been made worth his while by the debtor not to do so. The 'unjust' bailiff is warned by Lawrence that if he does not repent, he will be transferred to another post—a serious threat, for the post of bailiff is one of the most 'lucrative' and coveted in the *tabšil*.

By now Lawrence is beginning to feel the pangs of hunger,



SPADE OR HOE?



"THOU SHALT NOT MUZZLE THE OX."



but he decides to have a cursory look at the work of the registrar *kānūngo*, whose main duty is to summarize and register the material contained in the land records. Among other things Lawrence notices that many *patwāris* have had to be fined by the sub-divisional officer for not drawing their monthly pay at the *tabṣil* on the prescribed date. This may astonish my reader. Fancy anyone not coming for his pay! And if anyone is such a fool as to do that why should his employer object? The answer to the first question I will leave to my reader's imagination: the answer to the second is that when a *patwāri* comes to the *tabṣil* to draw his pay, he is also required to report certain matters to the registrar *kānūngo*, such as the transfer of proprietary rights in agricultural land.

By the time Lawrence has done with the registrar *kānūngo* it is nearly eleven o'clock. "I must be going now," he says. "Don't trouble to come to my camp, *Tabṣildar Sāhib*."

"It's my duty," replies the *tabṣildar* firmly—and that is that.

*Effects of a Hailstorm.* Yesterday morning the countryside had a pitiful experience which affected Lawrence only less deeply than the actual victims. Ever since he had been on tour he had seen the *rabī* fields ripening day by day, and now at the beginning of March they were almost ready to be cut. All had gone unbelievably well—wheat, barley, gram and peas were vying with each other in magnificence of outturn, and a bumper harvest seemed assured. But yesterday Nemesis had descended and in a few minutes a storm of hail smashed down the laden plants and wrecked the hopes and labours of months.

So this morning Lawrence has changed his plans and decided to inspect the damage done in half a dozen neighbouring villages. He has, however, made up his mind not to be swayed too much by sentiment, for a hailstorm is capricious, and while ruining one field may leave an adjoining one almost untouched, and fields also have a way of recovering to some extent if given time. Moreover the peasants, with an eye to relief, will paint the position as black as possible and not allow that there is a single redeeming feature. So as he starts off Lawrence makes a conscious effort to harden his heart.



He has scarcely left his camp when he is met by deputations of peasants, carrying handfuls of ruined plants, which they assume in their unsophisticated minds Lawrence will accept as typical, and crying "*Margaye, margaye*" (We're done for, we're done for). Lawrence gives them a kindly word and promises to inspect their villages.

For a time Lawrence allows himself to be led by the villagers who guide him along field after field, in which the crops are levelled to the ground, and emphasize the disaster by plucking up plants for Lawrence's inspection and by continual wailing. Presently, however, Lawrence shows more independence and strikes out on a line of his own. This causes consternation among the villagers, who entreat him to come and see their own particular fields, but Lawrence is adamant, and as he comes across a bright patch of crops, his attendants become glum and more taciturn, though a few still pick selected plants and try to bluff Lawrence into believing that not a field has been spared.

Having seen enough of the first village, Lawrence sets off to others with much the same result. The damage has been great, but something will be saved.

It has not taken long to describe this inspection, but it has taken Lawrence several hours to perform, for he has travelled many miles and much of his way has lain along narrow field-boundaries never intended for horse's hoofs.

On his return to camp Lawrence writes to the sub-divisional officer, directing him to make a detailed estimate of the damage. The sub-divisional officer will convey a similar order to the *tabisildār*, and the actual estimate will eventually be made by the *patwārīs*, though their work will be checked by the supervisor *kānūngos* upwards. If the damage in any *mahāl* is found to be more than 50 per cent or, to use Indian parlance, eight annas (in the rupee), the Government will arrange for the tenants' rent to be suspended or remitted wholly or in part by the indirect method of granting the zemindars proportionate relief in respect of land revenue.

What then has Lawrence gained by his cursory inspection? He has obtained a general idea of the loss, which will assist him to check the detailed estimates when they arrive, the knowledge

that he has visited the villages will make his subordinate officials more careful in preparing and checking the estimates, and, what is of no less importance, he has heartened the peasants by his display of sympathy.

*A Town.* Lawrence carefully puts a case of cigarettes in his pocket before he leaves camp this morning, for he is about to go round the town near by, and there is no knowing what smells he may have to encounter.

At the outskirts of the town proper he is met by the *bakhshī*, whose nearest English equivalent is the much more magnificent town clerk, four out of the seven members of the Town Committee—one is away and the other two “are coming”—and a few spectators. For my reader’s benefit let me say that this town is administered under the Town Areas Act, and has a population of about 5,000: two of the seats on the Committee are reserved for Muslims and five for Hindus, while there is also the subdivisional magistrate who is the chairman: apart from the *bakhshī*, the staff consists of six sweepers and a ‘mate’ to keep the roads clean (there are miles of them) and a *bhistī* to flush the drains: the *bakhshī* gets Rs20 pay a month, the ‘mate’ and *bhistī* Rs6 and the ordinary sweepers Rs5: the annual income, which is mainly derived from a tax on ‘circumstances and property’, is about Rs1000, and after deducting the pay of the staff and the cost of oil for the lamps about Rs200 remain for public works. So as you pass through the town, bear in mind its incomes and the salaries of the staff, and do not expect too much.

Before we start a problem arises as to Lawrence’s method of progress. One member of the Committee is mounted, the others are on foot. The horseman urges Lawrence not to put himself to the trouble of walking but to ride. Lawrence, however, to the obvious relief of the rest of the members, decides to undergo the ‘trouble’ and dismounts.

The procession, headed by Lawrence, starts. At first all goes smoothly enough. It is true that Lawrence points out a dirty cesspool or so, a few puddles round the wells, and an occasional obstruction in the shape of a heap of bricks or a platform in front of a shop, but these are ordinary defects and not too numerous,

and the roads are beautifully swept and the drains washed clean. Then suddenly the orderly progress is rudely interrupted. Like a bolt from the blue a grim figure leaps out from a side street and plants himself in front of Lawrence. "Come and look here, sir," he shouts. "Come and look here."

The party is visibly upset, but recovering themselves launch a counter-attack. One of the members of the Committee whispers that the man was defeated at the last election for the Committee, and the *bakhsbi* remarks that he has not paid his town-tax yet. To their dismay, however, Lawrence lets the interloper lead him to the fateful spot. Knowing what they are coming to, Lawrence's attendants lapse into a gloomy silence, and well they may. What a contrast to the streets along which he has already been conducted! It would indeed be difficult to imagine a more unsavoury place. The stench is overpowering, the drains are blocked with the accumulated filth of years, the cesspools are covered with primeval slime, and the remains of the road have been used for a purpose for which it was never intended. The *bakhsbi* murmurs something about paucity of sweepers. There is nothing more to say, and Lawrence, after expressing a pious hope that something may be done about it, turns on his heel and brings the painful scene to a close.

But the public-spirited citizen cannot be shaken off so easily as that. He attaches himself to Lawrence and in spite of the utmost discouragement persists in acting as a walking commentary on everything that lies in their way. In particular he points out the only too obvious defects in the 'public works' which are being or have just been constructed—the flaking of the plaster on the well-platform, the gaps between the bricks of the paved lane proclaiming the use of mud instead of mortar, the generous admixture of earth in the stacks of road-*kankar*. All that the Committee and the *bakhsbi* can plead in self-defence is that the contractor has not yet been paid in full. The same gentleman reveals that of the dozen lamps, which the whole town boasts, five are in front of houses of members of the Committee.

At last Lawrence announces that he has seen enough of the administration of the town. He is well aware that the comparative cleanness of the main streets, which he has seen to-day,

## INSPECTIONS

is mere eyewash and that the town will sink again to its natural state of dirt and neglect as soon as he has gone. Still the place is no worse than most, and an occasional clean-up is better than none at all.

Dismissing his rather dispirited escort, Lawrence enters the branch hospital. It is a small building with four rooms, serving as a dispensary, office, ward for in-patients, and operating-room respectively. 'Hospital' is rather a misnomer, 'dispensary' would be a better description, for a hundred or so out-patients come here each day, but in the in-patients' ward there is accommodation for only three men—there is no ward for women nearer than the headquarters hospital thirty miles away. The 'hospital' is in charge of a sub-assistant surgeon aided by a compounder.

At the time of Lawrence's visit there are three out-patients present—a woman with a baby that is dirty and emaciated and said to be suffering from 'fever'; a youth who complains of a 'cough' but is probably consumptive; and an oldish man bent double with rheumatism. Each of them receives a bottle of medicine with pathetic faith, hoping it may effect a miracle.

In the ward two beds are occupied. The first patient has a disgusting sore, which started as a slight cut and has been brought to this pass by application of mud-plasters, and the second has a cataract in one eye. The sub-assistant surgeon displays the ward with pride, conscious that every single rule and regulation has been observed to the letter and little guessing that Lawrence is mentally contrasting this ward with the comfort and brightness of an English one. With equal pride the sub-assistant surgeon shows that his instruments are free from rust and dirt, and the key of the poison-cupboard kept solely by himself. He is in fact a model sub-assistant surgeon, yet Lawrence somehow feels that he would not care to stay here long.

Lawrence has still a few minutes to spare and decides to devote them to a different kind of hospital—the veterinary one. There are only two animals in the courtyard—a bullock with a huge raw tumour on that part of the neck where the yoke rubs, and a *dhobi's* donkey with its hind legs turned right inwards and its fetlocks worn sore and bleeding by excessive loads. The donkey has been sent here by a magistrate, and the owner, who has been

convicted of cruelty, has reason to consider himself unfortunate in having been caught in one of those exceptional places where you may not torture an animal with impunity.

"Why do so few people bring their animals here?" asks Lawrence of the Muslim assistant surgeon.

"Because, sir, most people prefer to work them to death rather than do without them for a week or so."

Snowball neighs impatiently. "You lucky old brute," cries Lawrence affectionately as he rides away. "You've only got to pretend to be lame to get a holiday."

*A Village.* This morning Lawrence is to make a real 'village' inspection, for the institutions which he intends to visit are not such as are found merely at some kind of headquarters but are scattered throughout the district, and are found to some extent in all large villages. He plans to inspect no fewer than seven institutions, namely: the *panchayat*, school, pound, and shops for fire-works, liquor, drugs and opium. But they will be nice, simple little inspections and not take him overlong—in fact the inspections of the shops will occupy but a few minutes each.

"Where's the *sarpanch*'s house?" asks Lawrence of the first intelligent-looking man he meets in the village.

"This way, sir," he says, and leads Lawrence through twisting alleys past salaaming men, shrinking women, inquisitive children and frightened cattle, till at length he stops before a superior house.

It is detached and made of sun-dried bricks and has an open space in front of it and a large courtyard.

"*Mābarāj*," calls the guide, "the sahib's come."

Out pops the *sarpanch*, putting the finishing touches to his turban and trying to salaam at the same time.

"Salaam, *Pandit Sāhib*," says Lawrence, dismounting, "I've come to have a look at your work."

The *sarpanch* goes inside his house again and presently brings out a bundle of registers and an old *sirkārī* chair with one arm missing and with a wooden seat where once there had been cane. Lawrence accepts the invitation to sit on it as ceremoniously as if it were a throne.

By this time the *panches* and about twenty spectators have arrived. "Are you all pleased with the *panchayat*?" asks Lawrence.

"Very pleased. The *sarpanch* is a very good man," comes the prompt reply.

"What castes live here?"

"Brahmins and Thākurs and low-caste men."

"Of what caste are the *panches*?"

"The *sarpanch* and two *panches* are Brahmins and three *panches* are Thākurs, and one Brahmin *panch* has just died."

"What about appointing a low-caste man in the vacant place?"

This takes the villagers aback. It is a revolutionary proposal. For a time there is silence. Everyone looks to the *sarpanch* to see what he has got to say. "Very well," he replies at last.

"Excellent," says Lawrence. "Who's the most suitable man?"

There is much scratching of heads and whispered discussion. Finally they make up their mind. "Chhuttua, Chamar," announces the spokesman. "He can read and write."

So there and then Chhuttua is appointed to work with those whom he has always been taught to serve. He is overwhelmed and embarrassed, and, Lawrence knows, will not dare to disagree with his fellow-*panches* for many a long day. Still it is a beginning.

The *panchayat* has decided over a hundred criminal cases and about a dozen civil ones during the year. The prescribed procedure is of the simplest, and Lawrence does not inquire meticulously whether even this has been observed. It is enough that only two applications for revision of the *panchayat*'s decisions have been made to himself, and both of these were dismissed and that not a single complaint has been lodged.

Out of the fines which the *panchayat* has exacted there is an accumulated balance of about Rs50. Lawrence proposes that part of this be spent on repairing a well for the depressed classes. The *sarpanch* and his colleagues agree.

As Lawrence prepares to go the *sarpanch* folds his hands and says that he has a request to make.



"Tell it me," says Lawrence graciously.

"Our powers should be enhanced."

"Your work has been very good, and I'll consider it when I make my recommendations at the end of my tour."

"If only all *panchayats* were like this," reflects Lawrence, as he proceeds towards the school.

Turning a corner he espies a boy in front who makes off as fast as he can. That is the school-teacher's outpost whose duty it is to warn him of Lawrence's approach. Presently a familiar droning sound reaches Lawrence's ears. The boys are proclaiming to the world at large and Lawrence in particular that they are busy reading.

At the compound-gate Lawrence is met by the head-teacher and his two assistants. Before going inside the building he examines the exterior. The plaster has come off in many places, revealing the brick beneath.

"When are you going to carry out the annual repairs?" asks Lawrence.

"The district board only allotted me Rs20 this year and that was all spent on replacing the roof-tiles, which the monkeys had destroyed, and the panes of glass which the boys had broken."

As Lawrence enters the first room, the boys to the number of about thirty all rise, but at a signal from Lawrence squat down again on the strips of sacking spread along the sides of the room. For the teacher himself there is a *sirkāri* chair in front of a little table near the door. Educational pictures hang on the walls, but these are not sufficient to hide the numerous stains on the once-white surface, especially where the boys have leaned with oily heads or dirty clothes.

There are two rather smaller rooms, and in the second of these, where the 'infants' study, are three girls—the only ones in the school.

On his way through the rooms Lawrence counts the number of scholars present and finds that there are 76 scholars in all—an astonishing result, considering that the average daily attendance during the last six months has been only 62 and that the scheduled school-time has not yet begun. "Daubing the eyewash," thinks Lawrence to himself.



COWDUNG-CAKES FOR FUEL



A CHAUPAL



"Why are there only five members of the depressed classes?" asks Lawrence of the Brahmin head-teacher.

"Their parents won't send them."

But that, Lawrence suspects, is only half the truth.

Lawrence does not examine the educational attainments of the scholars—that is a matter for the educational staff—but, leaving the building for the compound, says he would like to see the boys drill. The youngest teacher thereupon puts about thirty boys through the hackneyed exercises with reasonable smartness, but after a time Lawrence asks to see the other boys drill too.

The head-teacher is taken aback. "They haven't learned yet," he replies. "They've only just come."

"Never mind, let me see them."

The drill-teacher makes a desperate effort to produce ordered movements out of a rabble. In vain! Some of the boys cannot even do a right turn, and the performance ends in fiasco.

Meanwhile Lawrence has been writing his inspection note, and having finished it he now rises from his seat. Then comes the inevitable request. "Please wait one minute, sir," entreats the head-teacher. "One of the boys wishes to sing a song."

"Not more than five minutes," says Lawrence firmly, looking at his watch.

The boy starts off with a monotonous chant which Lawrence has heard at nearly every school he has inspected. It is a glorification of the King-Emperor coupled with the name of the Collector Sahib. Or is it the other way about?

The five minutes is up, but the song continues.

At what appears to be the end of a verse Lawrence stands up resolutely and escapes.

The cattle-pound is the next thing on Lawrence's list. The pound is a *kachecha* one, that is, merely made of mud with a plaster-dressing, and parts of the walls look as if they might collapse at any moment. Within the yard Lawrence finds a pony eyeing a buffalo suspiciously, for in this pound there are not separate enclosures for horned and hornless animals. In one corner is a bowl of drinking-water, embedded in an earthen stand, and at the opposite end is an empty feeding-trough, protected by a narrow roof of corrugated iron. Outside the yard is a small mud-

shed, containing chopped millet-stalks for the buffalo and grass for the pony.

The pound-keeper produces his registers and Lawrence, seated on a charpoy, proceeds to inspect them. The vital question is "Does the pound justify itself by paying its way?" The main source of income is the fines paid by the owners of the impounded cattle. During the last completed year three hundred and thirty animals were impounded, on which fines amounting to Rs200 were paid. Besides this Rs20 were realized from the sale of a dozen unclaimed cattle—not a large sum per head, but unclaimed cattle are naturally not fine specimens—and Rs2 from the sale of manure. On the other side the expenses consist of the pound-keeper's pay amounting to Rs15 a month and the cost of repairs amounting to Rs15 a year. The cost of food need not be taken into account, for that is paid by the owners of the cattle. The pound therefore makes a small profit and has passed the acid test.

Being on the outskirts of the village Lawrence takes the opportunity of visiting the fireworks-shop, which for safety's sake is located a little distance from the houses. The licensee is awaiting Lawrence at the 'shop', which is merely a mud-hut with roof of corrugated iron. He produces his licence and, taking Lawrence inside, removes the lid from the pit in which gunpowder and fireworks are securely stored. Lawrence is quickly satisfied and proceeds to the other shops to be inspected.

First the shop where country-liquor is sold. It bears no resemblance to an English 'pub.' beyond the presence of intoxicating liquor. There is no 'bar' to attract customers, and most of them take the liquor away for 'consumption off the premises'. The liquor is made from molasses and is stored in casks, and, appropriately enough, whisky-bottles. As everyone who inspects a liquor shop knows, there are six bottles to a gallon. Apparently the stock agrees with the register, but Lawrence, not having a hydrometer, cannot say whether the liquor has been watered down. What makes him suspicious is that according to the accounts produced the profits are too meagre to make it worth while to keep the shop open. The licensee, who is as usual a Kayasth, is ready enough with reasons for the low sales—the temperance movement inau-

gured by the Congress as part of the programme of Non-Co-operation almost twenty years ago, the high cost of liquor in consequence of the increase in the Government duty, and the prevalence of illicit distillation—but he is not so able to explain why he clings to this seemingly unprofitable business. The inspector will have to make inquiries.

A little way on is the drugs-licensee. By 'drugs' in this context is meant the products of the hemp-plant—*ganja*, *charas* and *bhang*. The drugs are sold in tiny packets costing about a farthing each, and the profits are very slender, but the drugs business is merely a sideline in what we may perhaps call a grocer's shop. All is in order, and Lawrence passes on to the opium-licensee.

This man needs closer watching, for the commodity in which he deals is of a more insidious kind and there is the danger of his working hand-in-hand with smugglers. Lawrence has in fact heard privately from a visitor that this licensee is not altogether straight. His own formal inspection, of course, reveals nothing of value. On paper everything is in perfect order. Well, the inspector must be made to wake up and do more than routine inspections.

By now it is half-past ten, and the mid-March sun is becoming unpleasantly hot and Lawrence readily accepts the warning that it is time to return to camp.

*A Patwāri*. This morning Lawrence is to undertake an inspection of a kind which he usually leaves to his subordinate officers—that of a *patwāri*'s work. He has a special reason for making an exception. The land records officer on his last visit to the district reported very unfavourably on this *patwāri*, whereas the supervisor *kānūngo* had never made any complaint at all. And there is another reason which we will see later.

The *patwāri* has got wind of Lawrence's approach and greets him on arrival with a profound salaam. In his hand he holds his badge of office—a bundle wrapped in a cloth and containing his various registers. Lawrence stays long enough to attract a little crowd and then asks the *patwāri* where the *kānūngo* has checked his *khasra* (field-book). The *patwāri* shows him on his map. As Lawrence expected, the fields in question are all within a stone's throw of the village.

"Right," says Lawrence, dismounting, "I'll have a look." For



he wishes to see how the *kānūngo*, not only the *patwārī*, has done his work.

Lawrence takes the map into his hand and as he reaches each field calls out its number, the *patwārī* reads out the entries in the *khasra* concerning the area, the kind of crop grown in the *kharif* and the method of irrigation employed, and the attendant villagers signify whether the entries are correct. For a time all goes smoothly enough. There may be differences of opinion about small details such as the precise area devoted to each crop or the identity of the well from which a particular field was watered, but no serious mistakes come to light.

Then Lawrence strikes out on another line. He indicates on the map some fields a mile or so away on the edge of the Jumna. The *patwārī* does not like the idea. "It's an alluvial *mabāl*," he demurs.

"I know," replies Lawrence sweetly.

"It's a long way."

"I've got lots of time."

"It'll give your Honour great trouble."

"I'll endure it."

And he does.

As they approach the spot the character of the land begins to change and shows signs of the action of the river in past years, and level rectangular fields give place to irregular plots bounded by steep ravines. Lawrence decides that the time has come to check the *patwārī*'s map.

How different a result from that obtained before! It is difficult even to recognize many fields from the map, and when Lawrence farther on reaches the sand-deposits close to the river-bed he discovers new-born fields not shown in the map at all.

The *patwārī* attributes the blame to the vagaries of the river during the last few years, but if that may be some slight excuse for the *patwārī*'s not keeping his map up to date, it is at any rate none for the *kānūngo*'s having failed to inspect a single field in this troublesome locality.

Lawrence can imagine what happened. This was the kind of conversation which must have taken place between the *kānūngo* and *patwārī*.

*Kānūngo*: "Well, *Patwārī*, what fields is it convenient that I should check?"

*Patwārī*: "These"—pointing on his map—"just round the village. They haven't changed for years. You needn't trouble to go and see them. You can sign the entries here."

*Kānūngo* (*conscientiously*): "Oh, I must see some of them. That's the rule."

A most satisfactory arrangement it seemed for both concerned. They were both spared the trouble of a long tramp, the *patwārī* avoided the risk of detection of mistakes by the *kānūngo*, and the *kānūngo* would escape the danger of attesting an incorrect entry. And now everything had been upset by the mischance of Lawrence's taking it into his head to inspect the village himself.

The *patwārī* gets more and more flustered, but Lawrence does not pile on the agony too much. He has other things to see, and presently announces his intention of returning to the villages where he can more conveniently check the other registers. The *patwārī* is obviously grateful for this temporary relief, hardly realizing that escape from the frying-pan may mean a fall into the fire. So far he has been found guilty of nothing worse than carelessness.

Back in the village Lawrence takes his seat on the traditional charpoy and calls for the *khēwat* (the record of proprietary rights). A glance, however, is sufficient for this, as the whole village belongs to a single zemindar. In the village he is represented by an agent, who is assisted by two underlings ready to render any kind of physical service from taking a message to reducing a refractory tenant to a proper state of mind.

By now the crowd of onlookers has swollen, and Lawrence asks to see the *khataunī-jamabandī* (the record of tenants' rights and liabilities). Lawrence picks out a bright-looking member of the crowd and asks him his name.

"Ram Lal, Kachi," comes the reply.

"Are you a tenant?"

"Yes, sir."

"What sort of tenant?"

"A statutory tenant of one holding and occupancy tenant of another."

"Have you any co-sharer?"

"Yes, three or four."

Lawrence turns to the *patwārī*. "Let me see the entries for his statutory holding."

The *patwārī* reads out the numbers allotted to the various fields. They mean nothing to Ram Lal, who knows the fields by more intimate names such as "the suttee-field"—a little shrine still marks the place where a faithful wife was burned alive on a funeral pyre a hundred years ago—the "sandy field", and so on, but a little questioning makes it clear that the *patwārī*'s register refers to the same fields.

"Now let me hear the names of the co-sharers, *Patwārījī*," continues Lawrence.

"There are five or six," replies the *patwārī* evasively.

"Tell me their names," says Lawrence, not to be put off.

The *patwārī* gabbles them off, but not so quickly as to escape Ram Lal's notice. "Gajadhar Parshad, did you say?" inquires Ram Lal in evident astonishment.

"It looks like it," says the *patwārī*, scrutinizing the entry as if not quite sure whether he can decipher his own writing.

"Never," exclaims Ram Lal, emphasizing his denial with a loud click of his tongue. "We've had thousands of cases and he's always lost. The entry is false, quite false. . . ."

The fat is fairly in the fire. Two other of Ram Lal's recorded co-sharers join in and vehemently attack the *patwārī*. Amid the babel Lawrence cannot distinguish what they say, but it is abundantly clear that they do not admit that Gajadhar Parshad is, ever was, or has the remotest chance of ever becoming a co-sharer of theirs in anything. Gajadhar Parshad himself has found it convenient to keep out of the way.

Lawrence holds up his hand for silence. "What have you got to say, *Patwārījī*?"

"I received no order," murmurs the *patwārī*, highly agitated.

"Order? Order about what?" demands Lawrence.

The *patwārī* vouchsafes no reply.

"What made you think Gajadhar Parshad was a co-sharer?" goes on Lawrence.

"I inquired from people on the spot."

"What are their names?"

"I don't remember."

Lawrence drops the subject for a time, and turning to the second part of the register—the *jamabandī*—asks Ram Lal what rent he owes.

"Not a pice."

"But according to the register you owe Rs13 for your occupancy holding."

"I paid Rs30 to the zemindar's agent in the month of *Pūs* for both holdings. I owe nothing."

"Show me your *siyaha*," says Lawrence to the *patwārī*.

This reveals that Rs30 was indeed paid, but according to the *patwārī* Rs17 of this went towards the payment of the current rent of the statutory holding and the balance of Rs13 to arrears.

"There were no arrears," breaks in Ram Lal.

"Have you a receipt?" asks Lawrence.

"The zemindar doesn't give receipts," replies Ram Lal.

"Then why don't you pay the money into court?"

"We never have done so."

"Well, in future either get a receipt or pay the money into court."

An examination of the entries about other tenants' holdings yields much the same result. The tenants raise indignant but rather muddled protests, the *patwārī* gives elusive explanations, and Lawrence himself is rather bewildered. The cumulative effect is to convince Lawrence that the *patwārī* is dishonest, but in no particular case has the evidence so far forthcoming been strong enough to amount to proof. The *patwārī* cannot be punished on suspicion, and the sub-divisional officer will have to inquire more thoroughly than Lawrence has had time to do. Till then the *patwārī* must have the benefit of the doubt.

Lawrence, however, has still one card to play—a trump. "Where do you live?" he asks of the *patwārī* casually.

But the question is not so innocent as it sounds, for a *patwārī* who lives outside his circle commits a cardinal offence.

"In the village," replies the *patwārī*. "The zemindar has given me a house."

"Show it me, please."

A procession is formed with the *patwārī* in front, then Lawrence, and behind him the rest following expectantly.

The *patwārī* stops before a tumbledown mud-house.

"May I go inside?" asks Lawrence. "Or are your womenfolk here?"

"My wife is on a visit to her father."

"Oh," says Lawrence and enters the courtyard. "May I see the rooms?"

"I have no objection," lies the *patwārī*.

Lawrence enters one room after the other. They are all empty except one, which contains a pair of bullocks.

"Whose bullocks are these?" asks Lawrence.

"The zemindar's."

"Where's your bed?"

"It's gone to be mended."

"Where do you keep your clothes?"

"The *dhobī*'s washing them."

"Where's your cooking-place?"

"Over there," says the *patwārī*, pointing to a broken *chūlha* in a corner of the courtyard.

"How did it get broken?"

"A small boy must have kicked it."

"Where are your cooking-pots?"

But the *patwārī* can brazen it out no longer. He knows he has been found out. His guilt indeed is written in his demeanour, as he stands shuffling from one foot to the other, his head downcast and his fingers nervously handling his bundle.

Lawrence need hesitate no longer. He screws himself up to the proper pitch. "You're suspended," he announces sternly.

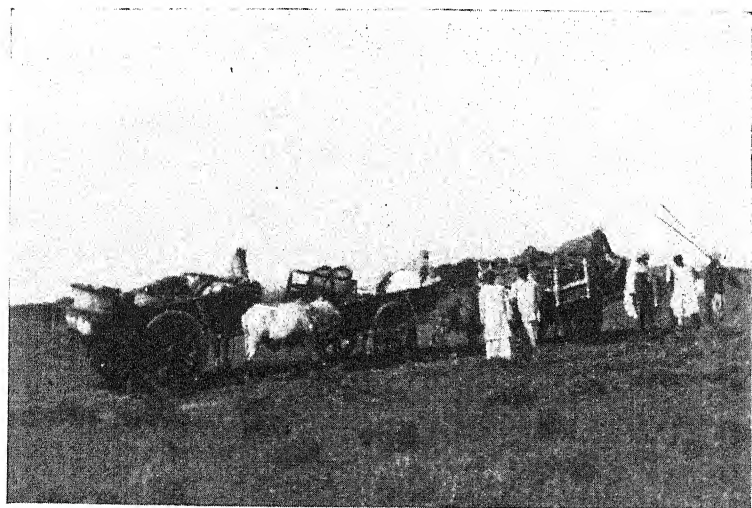
The *patwārī* breaks down utterly. Throwing himself at Lawrence's feet, he wails and moans. "My family will starve. Forgive me, forgive me."

But Lawrence, fearing he may weaken, springs on to Julia's back and gallops off.

Regretfully he returns to camp for the last time this season. To-morrow morning he says good-bye for the present to open-air life and goes back to headquarters, soon to endure the weariness and monotony of another hot weather.

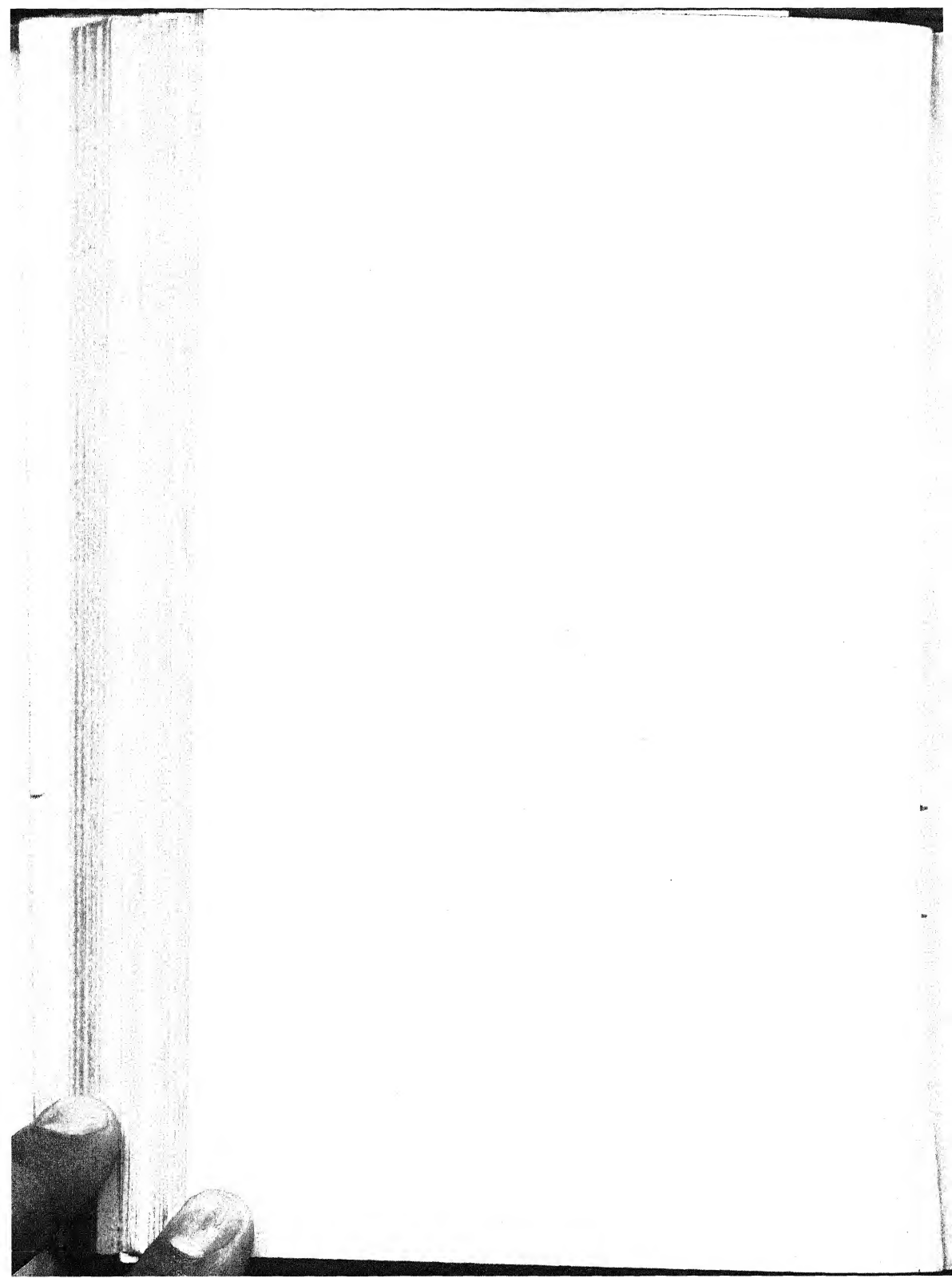


A CAMP IN A MANGO GROVE



BULLOCK-CARTS WITH CAMP EQUIPMENT





## CHAPTER V

### THE EUROPEAN'S HOUSE AND HOUSEHOLD

IMAGINE a glaring white, flat-roofed building about the height of a two-storeyed English house but several times as broad, with a verandah on the sunny sides and a large porch and numerous doors flanked by windows and surmounted by skylights; and you have a typical European's house in India. It stands in a spacious compound of several acres, which, near the house with its lawn and flowers, is of the nature of a garden but, as it extends farther, passes beyond control and finally degenerates into a wilderness.

But let me hasten to explain that there are countless variations from this type. In particular the walls may be of bare brick with no disguise of plaster, and the roof may be a sloping one of thatch.

Close by the main building stands the kitchen, and at the extreme limits the servants' quarters, ramshackle and untidy, and swarming with humanity.

Inside the house what impresses the newcomer is the absence of passages and stairs, the loftiness and spaciousness of the rooms, the multitude of doors leading outside or joining room with room, and the concrete floors. The inside doors are all left open, and except in the hot weather, the outer ones too: and this creates a disquieting lack of privacy. It is true that across the spaces of the inner doors curtains are drawn and in front of the spaces of the outer ones *chiks* hang down by day and *purdahs* by night, but these can be easily pulled aside or lifted, and the servants, who walk barefooted in the house, move so silently that they are in the room before you know it.

As for conveniences, electric-light and pipe-water are being

gradually extended, but oil-lamps and well-drawn water are still customary.

Every bedroom has a bathroom attached, but it contains no luxurious, full-length bath, in which you can wallow at your ease, but merely a zinc tub in which you have to sit, not lie. And even if you are the proud owner of a real English bath, the hot water will never reach immersion point, for there is no generous tap from which you can draw unlimited supplies, but one or at most two kerosene tins, strictly rationed by the calculating *bhishti*.

Houses in India have no bell or knocker, the fiction being that a servant is always waiting in the verandah to receive any visitors who may arrive.

But if most houses in India lack what in England are considered the main conveniences, they possess two special ones designed to meet India's primary need of coolness.

First comes the punkah. An electric punkah needs no description, but the hand-pulled punkah, which is the common type in India, may not be familiar to some readers. It consists of a long pole suspended from the ceiling with ropes, and hanging from the pole a strip of cloth or matting. To the pole is fixed another rope or leather thong which passes through a hole in the lintel of the door and is pulled and let go alternately by a man who sits outside; and as the punkah passes to and fro, it creates a breeze for the benefit of the sahib underneath.

Next is the khus-khus *tatti*, which is a bow-shaped screen made of the fibrous roots of khus-khus grass, and is a device for transforming the *lū* (the hot west wind) by means of evaporation into a cool breeze. This is effected by fitting *tattis* in each outer door facing west and keeping them damp, the dampness being supplied by the *bhishti* who dashes water on them from a tin which he replenishes from a tub.

Strangely enough refrigerators are seldom used, mainly, I suppose, because of their unwieldiness, the usual device for keeping food cool being an ice-box or a pot of damp, porous clay, or a basket made of khus-khus and slung from a tree.

## THE EUROPEAN'S HOUSE

So much then for the European's house. What of his household?

The number of servants which a European keeps in India is proverbial, and in an ordinary house there will probably be between twelve and twenty, caste or custom requiring that there shall be a different servant for every kind of job. The pay of most of them is between seven and twenty rupees a month, a rupee being worth about 1s. 6d., though those with special qualifications such as the motor-driver may get as much as thirty or even more: and if the pay is low, the work, which each servant has to do, is, as may be imagined, proportionately light.

The number and kind of servants vary according to the profession and status of the sahib, but the following list is fairly typical:—bearer or valet, *khidmatgār* or butler, *khānsāmāh* or cook, *bhishti* or water-man, *mehtar* or sweeper, *sais* or groom, one or two *ghasiyāras* or grass-cutters, motor-driver, *mālī* or gardener with one or two coolies as assistants, *chaukidār* or watchman, *dhobī* or washerman, ayah.

In addition there will be two or three *chaprāsīs*, and in the hot weather three or four punkah-pullers, while from time to time a *darzī*, or tailor, is employed.

The *khānsāmāh* and *khidmatgār* are nearly always Muslims, for meat is anathema to most Hindus; and the *bhishti* and *darzī* are also Muslims for less obvious reasons. The *chaprāsīs* may be either Muslims or Hindus. The other servants are usually Hindus. I referred above to the lowness of the servants' pay, and when it is borne in mind that no food is provided, the pay seems lower still. On the other hand the Indian standard of living is much lower than the European, and some of the servants have the chance of adding to their pay by means of perquisites. The bearer, *khānsāmāh*, motor-driver, and *sais*, for instance, have the privilege of presenting the sahib with bills for petty expenses incurred by their departments, and when doing this, they exercise the middleman's prerogative of exacting some commission. Whatever they receive they will levy their perquisites just the same—in fact it seems to give them special pleasure to get money in this way.

When you wish to call a servant in India the recognized method is to shout '*Koi hai?*' (Is anyone there?) to which the proper response is '*Huzūr*' (literally 'the presence', and meaning anything from 'sir' to 'your Majesty'). By rights a *chaprāsī* or some other servant should always be within hail, but when the sahib shows signs of having comfortably settled down, the servant on duty is apt to slip away 'to get a drink of water' or for some other urgent reason, and the repeated '*Koi hai?*' is answered by silence in the negative.

Most sahibs are as punctilious about the appearance of their servants as a sergeant-major is about spit and polish, and insist on their chief servants wearing a uniform consisting of an *achkan*, a long kind of coat reaching to the knees, with a belt round the waist. The touch of retainership is often added by a ribbon of the old school-tie pattern—and sometimes a badge as well—worn in front of the turban and proclaiming the master's family or service. Unfortunately most servants show no corresponding passion for wearing uniform, and, in particular, seize every opportunity to discard the belt, which they regard with peculiar distaste but whether due to discomfort or the feeling that it is a mark of servitude I could never quite make out.

When you need a new servant, you do not go to a registry office but inform the bearer and he parades the local candidates. Most come armed with chits which require most careful 'vetting'. If there are big gaps, you don't accept too lightly the oft-told tale of destruction by fire or flood: if a chit says that its bearer is honest and sober, you conclude that he is not industrious; if a youth, who looks scarcely out of his teens, produces chits of the nineties, you marvel not at his appearance but at his carelessness.

And now, assuming that our roll of servants is complete, let us call them up and have a look at each in turn.

*The bearer, or valet.* What does the bearer bear? Nothing in particular, but in the old days he used to bear the palanquin. Now his special duties are to look after his master's clothes and clean his shoes and to help him to dress, and, if his master has drunk deep enough of India's relaxing air, to help him to undress too. The clothes he keeps in some mysterious way known

only to himself, and the sahib will hardly find even a handkerchief without his aid.

But that does not exhaust his duties. He has others of a more lordly nature. He is the big-noise among the servants and must keep them all in order and hand on to them the commands which the sahib gives to him.

He is also the keeper of the privy purse—or more strictly of the petty cash—and must be ready to shell out annas or rupees whenever called upon to do so.

Not that he always does the shelling out. There is a day of reckoning; and what a reckoning! The bill that he presents consists of countless petty items—a couple of annas each for railway-coolies, a few annas for a collar-stud, a rupee or so for needle and thread and buttons, and the same for shoe polish, another rupee for the man who wrote out the accounts in English of Indian idiom, and so *ad infinitum*—all of them so petty that to dispute them seems niggardly and hardly worth the time, yet in the aggregate amounting to a good proportion of the sahib's income.

That at any rate is what has to be endured by the defenceless bachelor, who cannot spare time for domestic duties or take his bearer's accounts more than once a month. When a mem-sahib arrives a changes comes over the scene, and she will probably know the price of every article to the nearest pie and hold a daily audit of his accounts, turning every demand relentlessly inside out. Yet a few stray items will escape even her eagle eye; or if they do not, the bearer will either regretfully give notice or claim a rise in pay to compensate him for the loss of the gains that have been snatched from him.

The griffin often picks up his first bearer on landing at Bombay where he will have an embarrassingly large choice, but if he selects any of that motley crowd the chances are that his first bearer will prove to be like his first horse—so much experience.

*The khidmatgār, or butler.* His name means "the man who serves", but why he above all others should be honoured with the title of *the* servant is one of those Eastern mysteries which I never fathomed. His most exalted moments are when he waits at table and hands round the dishes, but in the intervals he also cleans the silver and, if there is no *mashālchī*, washes up. The



*masbālcā*, if he answered to his name, should be the 'torch-bearer', but his torch has gone the way of the bearer's palanquin and he is now nothing more romantic than a scullion.

*The khānsāmāh, or cook.* To the mere man it is a perpetual marvel how the *khānsāmāh* can turn out such elaborate meals with such primitive apparatus. Even at headquarters the oven consists merely of an arrangement for placing pots over a charcoal fire, while in camp the *khānsāmāh* has to do with a hole in the ground and a few bricks. Yet even in camp he regularly provides a dinner of five courses. Nor is he at all perturbed if without warning you bring home a guest or so or postpone the time for dinner indefinitely. The last-named contingency he is able to tackle by means of a contrivance called the 'hotcase', in which food can be kept warm for hours without getting overcooked.

The *khānsāmāh* indeed will cheerfully submit to conditions which no English cook would tolerate for a day, but truthfulness compels me to say that there are points in which according to European standards the *khānsāmāh* falls short of perfection. Like most Indians he cannot understand why Europeans are so fussy about cleanliness, and it is essential that the *sahib* or *mem-sahib* visits the kitchen frequently. The pots and pans are often not above reproach, and apart from that the *khānsāmāh* is inclined to treat the kitchen not merely as a place to cook in but also as his general residence, including his bedroom and smoking-room.

He usually keeps his own stock of poultry, and a constant sound of the compound is the shriek of an unfortunate chicken, which has been marked down for dinner, as it flies from its pursuer.

Like many other popular ideas about the East, it is not true that people in India live almost entirely on curry or that the curries are hot enough to blow your head off. It is true in some households, but that is due to the *sahib's* choice, not the *khānsāmāh's*.

The *khānsāmāh's* speciality is spices, those mysterious ingredients which you never see as separate entities but which according to the *khānsāmāh* provide the flavour of every dish. It is astonishing too how many eggs he manages to include in every pudding.

His bill, like the bearer's, is a perpetual problem. One item still sticks out in my memory. It ran 'One hen died by bitch'.

I need hardly say that the hen was the *khānsāmāh*'s and the bitch mine.

*The bhistī, or water-man.* He has the finest name of all—'celestial', referring presumably to the preciousness of water in the Indian heat. He carries his water in a *masak*, that is a goat's skin, the goat's neck serving as a spout. The *masak* is slung from his right shoulder by a strap across his body and supported by his left hip. To maintain his balance he leans towards the right; and this gradually gives his body such a list as to make his profession obvious even when he is not carrying his *masak*.

*The mehtar, or sweeper.* He, too, has a high-sounding name, *mehtar* meaning 'prince', but anything more unlike a prince it would be difficult to imagine. He belongs to the despised *bhangī* caste, and has to sweep the rooms and do all the dirty work. His broom consists of a bundle of twigs tied together: and included in his dirty work, according to Indian ideas, are the care and feeding of your dogs. But the sweeper scores over the other servants in one respect—he is the only one who will deign to eat what the *sahib log* have left on their plates, all of which is heaped together to make him a wonderful potpourri.

*The saīs, or groom.* He is usually a *chamār*, who looks down upon the *bhangī* but is himself despised by most other castes, for his ancestral occupation is the preparation of that unclean thing—leather.

His class must bitterly lament the intrusion of the motor-car which signalized the end of the large stables of the good old days, but even now one or two horses must be kept by every touring officer who has to travel across country.

One *saīs* for two horses is the scale, which can no more be broken than a trade-union's rules.

Like all of us the *saīs* has his little weaknesses. He prefers, for instance, to apply the curry-comb direct to the horse's side; he aid and abets the blacksmith to make the hoof fit the shoe; and he is not proof against the temptation to eat the horse's gram himself, unless you mix it with some kind of fodder unpalatable to human beings.

*The ghasiyāras, or grass-cutters.* These men really do what

their name implies except that they do not cut the grass so much as tear it up with a blunt instrument shaped like a flat trowel and called a *khurpī*. But they are not, as you might conclude, human lawn-mowers. The grass they mutilate is usually not yours, and they treat it in this way not because it is too long but because they need the tearings. The grass in fact, as you have guessed, is wanted for the horses. For in this topsy-turvy land horses do not go to the grass, but the grass comes to them.

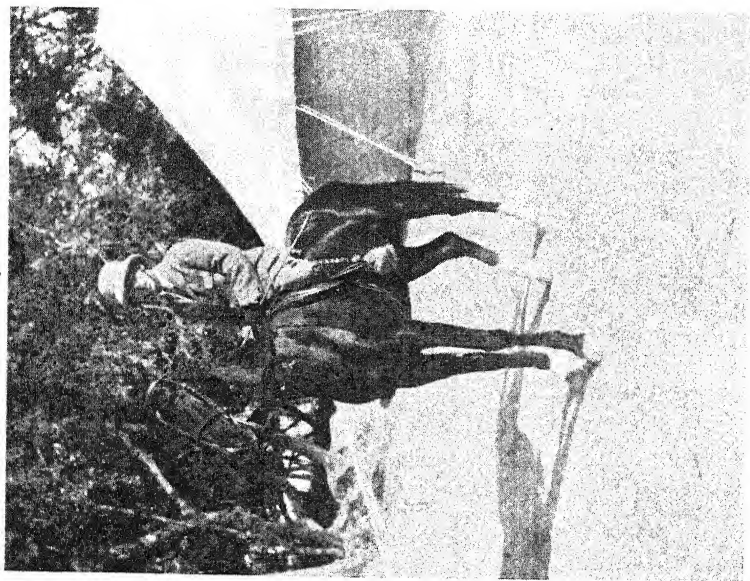
One grass-cutter is allotted to every horse, and when I tell you that grass may be collected almost anywhere except in private compounds, you may infer that a grass-cutter has a cushy job. But actually he is as hard-worked as any Indian servant. For it is one thing to be permitted to remove grass, another thing to find it. So scarce indeed is good pasture, especially near a town, that the grass-cutter may have to tramp many miles and toil many hours to amass sufficient fodder for a single day. And when not getting grass he is expected to assist the *sais*. One day he hopes to become a full-blown *sais* himself.

*The motor-driver.* The 'draiver', being a product of modern times, may belong to any caste or race. He drives by the light of nature and relies mainly on his horn and brakes. He is an expert at taking your car to bits but not so clever at putting them back again. He presents long bills for oils and grease, but somehow, to judge from sundry squeaks, the car is by no means over-lubricated; and the gallons of petrol, for which you have to pay, compel you, in spite of his protests, to suspect some kind of leak.

*The māli, or gardener.* The *māli's* duty, as pointed out long ago by "Eha", is to produce flowers and vegetables—produce, mark you, not grow, for it does not follow that all the flowers that adorn your rooms, or all the vegetables that load your table, sprang from the soil of your own garden.

For obvious reasons the *māli* is more interested in the cultivation of vegetables than flowers; and at least one of those who served me was reputed to keep a greengrocer's shop.

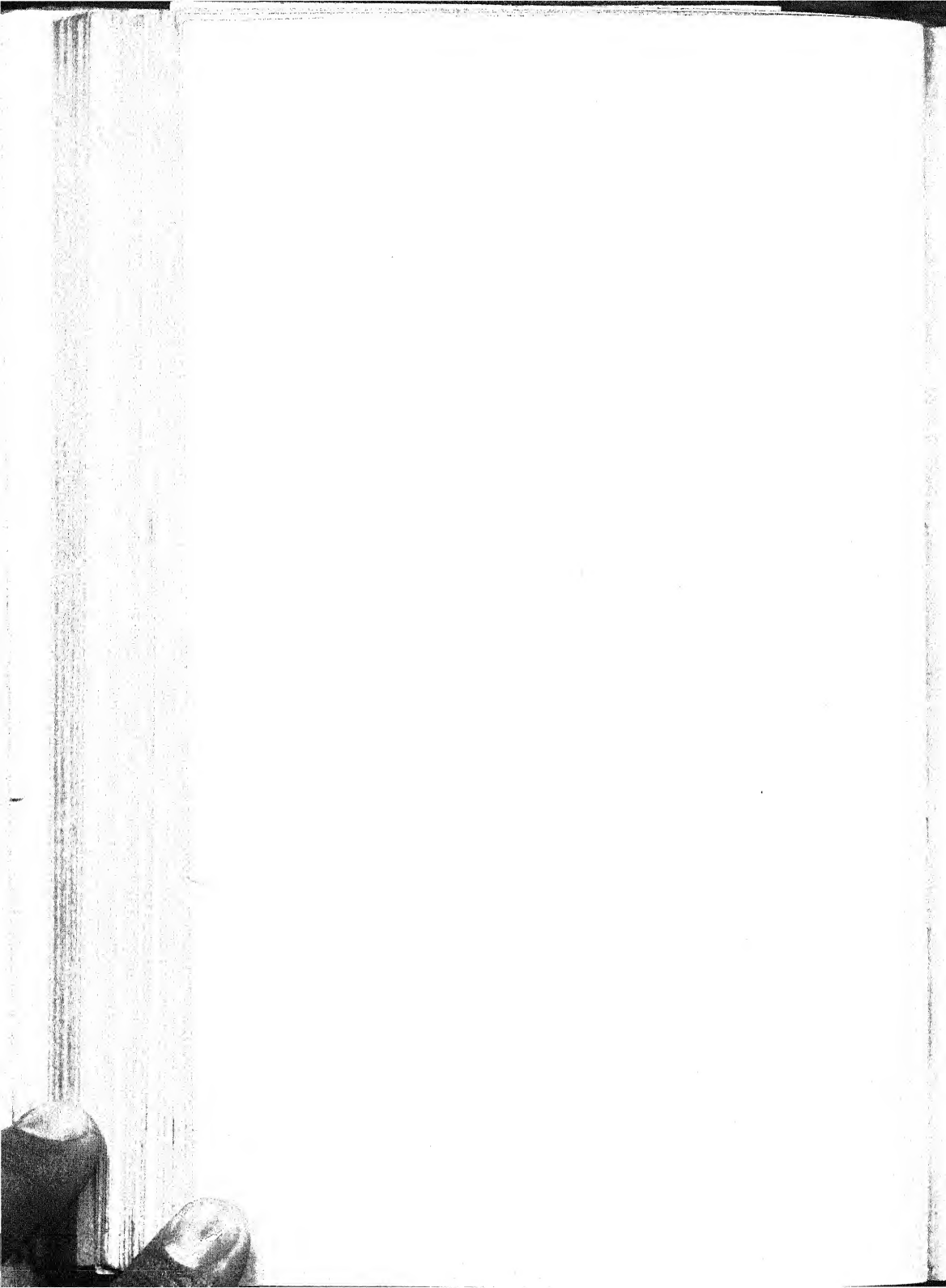
The *māli* has a constant struggle to keep the garden green in a country where rain, except during the few months of the recognized rainy seasons, is an event: and he and his assistants are for



THE AUTHOR



A WELL INSPECTION



ever directing water along the network of channels, without which an Indian garden would dry up.

He has his own way of marking out the tennis court, sprinkling generous handfuls of dry powdered lime along the lines, but whether he prefers that method or follows it because he has no machine I cannot say.

*The chaukidār, or watchman.* Some sahibs such as district officers or superintendents of police have the privilege of a police guard, but most people have to keep a private *chaukidār*. His badge of office is a *lāthī*, and his duty is to keep guard at night.

But you cannot reasonably expect a man to remain alert the whole night long, especially when he works in the day too, as the *chaukidār* often does. At any rate the *chaukidār* knows his limits, and instead of attempting the impossible contents himself with rolling himself up in a blanket and lying in the verandah. While he is asleep, he signifies his presence with his snores, and while awake, with repeated clearings of his throat.

That is the common and most healthy way for a *chaukidār* to keep guard, but in some stations the *chaukidārs* have a pernicious habit of shouting to each other from one compound to another, with the object of cheering each other and scaring thieves away, but which has the practical effect of disturbing everybody's sleep and warning thieves where each *chaukidār* happens to be at the moment.

Actually the surest protection of the house is not the *chaukidār's* *lāthī* but his membership of some criminal tribe. In recognition of this the rest of the fraternity are in honour bound to leave you alone, in much the same way, I suppose, as racketeers in Chicago spare those who contribute to their funds.

*The dhobi, or washerman.* In India the European's washerman is a private servant, though he may work for several masters, and he is paid a fixed wage, not so much per article. Indigenous too are his methods. First he dips the clothes in a tank of water—careful masters have their private tank—and then in order to get the dirt out he strikes each garment in turn repeatedly on a large stone. This gets the dirt out all right, but, I need hardly say,



wreaks such havoc on the material and buttons as might turn an English laundry green with envy.

*The ayah.* This lady may be either a female bearer for the mem-sahib or a nanny for the children. I know her only in her latter capacity. She is devoted to her charges and they usually reciprocate her affection—in fact mothers, whose social duties leave them little time for their children, often find that they have to take second place in their children's hearts.

Unfortunately the ayah suffers from an inferiority complex when dealing with European children, and the children, not the ayah, usually control the situation. Her main object is to please the children and at all costs to stop them from crying; and she finds that the easiest way of doing this is to let them always have their own way. With very young children ayahs are said to employ an even more demoralizing method, appeasing them with little opium pills.

*Chaprāsīs, or orderlies.* The *chaprāsī* owes his name to the *chaprās* or brass plate, worn in front of his belt and bearing the name of the office or officer he serves.

Strictly speaking the *chaprāsī* is a public servant, but his duties do not end in court or public office. He has also to attend the sahib at his house, and there the distinction between public and private gets blurred: so that he may not only have to look after his office (no one in India ever speaks of a study), announce visitors and go messages, but also have to clean the sahib's gun or amuse his children. It is all in the day's run. The *chaprāsī* does not mind.

*Punkah-pullers.* Who would be a punkah-puller? What a wearisome and thankless task it must be! For two hours at a stretch he must pull unceasingly; and the hotter it is and the sleepier he feels, the harder he must pull and the more bitterly he is cursed.

And if he has a sahib who goes to bed indoors, the punkah-puller's lot is more unhappy still; for if he lets the punkah stop at night, why anything may happen. Of course there is the sahib's point of view as well.

*The darzī, or tailor.* A *darzī* is quite unlike an English tailor except that both make clothes. In England you are your tailor's

customer, but in India the *darzi* is your servant. You do not employ him permanently, but when you or the memsahib need his services, he is summoned to your house and squats in your verandah, sewing-machine and all, till you have done with him.

The *darzi* is an excellent imitator, but a poor creator. If you wish him to make anything, he never measures you, but you have to provide a pattern, which he will copy to the last detail. So you must take care that the pattern has no patch in it, or that may be reproduced in the new garments too.

The material for the garments is supplied by yourself, and this does not always go as far as you anticipated. But to calculate the area of the intricate pieces of a garment in terms of so many yards of  $x$ -inches is beyond the mensuration-powers of even most mem-sahibs. The wily mem-sahib, however, is not defeated. If she cannot measure, she can weigh: and if the weight of the material diminishes in the process of being made up, that is a phenomenon which even the *darzi* finds difficult to explain.

And that must end the roll of servants. Others there are, hovering in the background, who would claim admittance to the band. There is the shikari, for instance, who spends most of his time in searching for imaginary game, the *bālbar* (barber!) who cuts the sahib's hair in the verandah, the *gwāla* who lets himself out with cow attached—rather, perhaps, the cow with himself attached—and other supernumeraries. But these are not employed so regularly as to warrant detailed description here.

So there they are—not really a bad lot on the whole. If I have dwelt on their weaknesses, that is because that side is most likely to entertain my readers. In spite of all their peccadilloes they regard the relationship between master and servant as not merely a mercenary one; and when they have eaten a sahib's salt, as the expression goes, they consider themselves as members of his household in a literal sense. They look upon their master as their protector and expect him to make them advances in time of need, to tend themselves and their families when ill or send them to hospital, and to help them generally, while in return they will treat him with such respect as might satisfy a patriarch.

#### IMPRESSIONS OF AN INDIAN CIVIL SERVANT

The thoughts of all, who have left India for good, go back sometimes, I am sure, to the band of retainers to whom they have had to say good-bye. I know that I still remember the last salaam given to me by my bearer before I joined the queue for the medical inspection on the quay at Bombay, never to see him again.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE EUROPEAN'S LIFE IN AN INDIAN STATION

The General Characteristics of European Society—The Physical Conditions—The Lack of Amenities—Compensations

PARTS of the description of European life which will be found in this chapter will astonish some birds of passage, particularly the more brilliant ones that flit from one Government House to another. For what is here described is mainly the life not of men who escape to the hills for the hot weather, nor of those who reside in cantonments or large stations where Europeans may be counted at any rate by the score, but of those who spend nearly the whole year in an ordinary small station in the plains.

For the sake of convenience the chapter is divided into four parts, but the division makes no claim to be strictly logical.

*The General Characteristics of European Society.* The first characteristic which I should like to stress with regard to life in a small station—and three out of four stations are small—is its loneliness. According to the census of 1931 out of a total population of 353,000,000 in India including Burma, there are 156,000 Britishers and 13,000 non-British Europeans and allied races (including Americans and Armenians). Even according to this proportion the European population might be described without much exaggeration as a drop in the ocean, but the actual proportion in most parts of India is much lower than would be gathered from these figures. For a large part of these Europeans are concentrated in a few big cities, there being 24,000 in Calcutta and Bombay alone, and nearly 60,000 consist of soldiers, most of whom are massed in a few places of strategical importance, and even the small balance left is distributed unevenly so that in most

stations the European families can be counted on one hand with a finger or so to spare.

Small stations indeed with a mere sprinkling of Europeans have always been the rule, but the tendency has been intensified within the last twenty years or so by the increased Indianization of the various services, and in many a station as you wander here and there the deserted bungalows seem to cry out: "Ichabod! Ichabod!"

I do not wish to imply that Indians do not count from a social point of view, but the fact is that their customs and outlook on life are so different that Europeans cannot find in them the companionship which they get from men of their own race. Orthodox Hindus, for instance, refuse to eat with anyone outside their caste and hardly any Indian of any position, whether Hindu or Muslim, —in the United Provinces, at any rate—will allow a strange man to see his womenfolk.

In the old days even the smallest station had its European club at which all the Europeans in the station at the time would gather each evening, but for lack of members most of these clubs have now had to close their doors; and Europeans have now to be grateful for admission to the Indian clubs, which provide good tennis but fall short in the matter of bridge, billiards, and the bar, and other indoor amusements.

Not only are there few European families in most stations, but there is often the added loneliness of families broken up. With the advent of the hot weather most of the women take refuge in the hills, but most of the men must remain at their posts below. Some wives indeed defy the heat and stay devotedly by their husbands' sides, but there comes a time when duty requires that they should go. A woman may sacrifice her own health, but not that of her children: and so for about half the year she and her husband are parted.

Later the separation becomes more acute. It is the unwritten law that children must not stay in India after the age of seven. If they do the climate may undermine their health, and the servility of servants and, in the plains, the want of playmates may warp their character; and, even apart from these cogent reasons, there is one which by itself would prove conclusive with most families—

services there are what are known as the 'carpet-bag' stages when those involved spend their time moving from one place to another, alternately officiating in posts which they are not senior enough to hold substantively, and, as senior men return from leave at the beginning of the cold weather, reverting to a lower post in another station.

Less definite is the streak of old-fashionedness which marks so many Europeans in India. I do not refer to clothes—that goes without saying about people most of whom visit Europe only once every three or four years—but to their reverence for ancient etiquette, as though they considered it a matter of loyalty to uphold the old traditions among an alien race. The quality is vague and difficult to illustrate, but a case in point is the persistency with which they cling to the dinner-ceremonial which was once the vogue in England. There are not a few men who even in the solitude of camp still solemnly don dress-clothes every night and would consider any departure from this custom as the first step downwards: five or six courses are the normal allotment even when there is no guest: a liveried *khidmatgār*, his turban perhaps adorned with his master's arms, hands round the dishes and at the close produces the inevitable finger-bowl, and, last rite of all, the port appears and, if there is more than a solitary diner, circulates as regularly as the sun whose course it follows. Perhaps in this respect the white men are to some extent the slaves of their servants who consider custom the best guide even for sahibs.

Old-fashioned, too, is the law that requires the newcomer to drop cards on everyone, not merely on strangers but on those whom he has known for years in other stations. In the hills and large stations the task of distributing cards is a formidable one, in fact would be impossible but for the merciful habit of fixing a box outside for their reception with the not always truthful label 'Not At Home'.

The hospitality of the East is famous. But in the East it is not merely the Easterner that is hospitable; the Westerner catches the infection, at any rate he acquires such a sense of hospitality as is rarely seen in his native habitat. In the small station indeed there is little scope for the endless round of social gaieties which brighten the places blessed with a larger population, but even in the tiniest



station excuses for dinner-parties are furnished not infrequently by the arrival of a visitor engaged on a tour of inspection. Such visits, however, afford an opportunity for more magnificent hospitality than a mere station-dinner; they provide some local resident with the opportunity of sheltering and entertaining the guest for several days, unless he is independent enough to prefer his own company in an inspection bungalow. Even the most casual acquaintance can count on a genuine welcome from his host on one condition—that he brings his bedding with him. The *bistar* indeed, by which comprehensive term is meant the hold-all and its contents of blankets, sheets and pillows, is the hall-mark of the European travelling in India. That and his multifarious packages, ranging from large steel uniform-cases to hand-bags, topis, and odds and ends which the bearer has been unable to squeeze into any receptacle.

And that brings us to another characteristic of the European in India—the travelling habit. In India you are always travelling, travelling on tour through the district or beyond, travelling on transfer from one station to another, travelling to the hills, travelling joyously to Bombay or not so joyously back.

As a necessary corollary, you are always packing or unpacking—not merely a suit-case or so but often a large part of your household effects. You live, so to speak, on your boxes; and one of the joys of retirement is the feeling that you can unpack everything, spread it all out and dig yourself in without the fear of having to collect everything again and uproot yourself whenever ‘the exigencies of the public service’ demand it.

There is another matter which must be mentioned somewhere. At one time I thought of including it among the pests of India, to which we shall come later, but on second thoughts, reflecting that it is also a habit, I have decided to insert it here.

In India people are for ever receiving or writing chits.

“Call that a pest?” you cry. “Why, I love receiving letters, though I’m not so keen on writing them.”

But supposing you received letters not at certain fixed hours but all day long, and supposing whenever a letter arrived you had to put everything aside and open that letter and give some sort of an answer straight away? Not so nice, eh?

the lack of schools. There are indeed a few 'European' schools in the hills, but these are intended primarily for domiciled Europeans and Anglo-Indians (which, I would remind you, is *officialese* for Eurasians) and no one would claim that these schools attain to the standard of those in England.

So one day the family embark for leave, but the parents cannot feel the elation which they have always experienced on such occasions before, for, like a black cloud on the horizon, looms the bitter thought that when they return to India they will be one, or perhaps two, short. All too quickly the dreaded moment arrives and father and mother, smiling for their children's sake, say good-bye to those whom they have come to regard almost as part of themselves.

Back in India sooner or later the mother has to face a cruel problem. Should she leave her children to the care of others? Or should she desert her husband and visit them? Wife or mother, which is to come first? Which is the greater loyalty? Probably she will compromise by dividing her time between the two. But passages are expensive, and she may have to be separated from one or the other for years at a stretch.

After this, need I say that the event of the week in an Indian station is the arrival of the English mail? What excitement there is if it comes a little early! What disappointment if it is delayed! How lovingly those childish misspelt scrawls are scanned! How eagerly the words of old friends are read and re-read!

Never perhaps is their position brought home more poignantly to the exiles of India than at Christmas. Celebrations indeed there are galore. Christmas cards pour in—for in celebrating Christmas the Indian is more Christian than the Christian; Indian visitors throng to your house, each bringing a *dālī* of fruit or cakes, a band serenades you, clerks salaam you, police present arms, servants and a swarm of people, some of whom you do not even recognize, expect you to manifest your joy by the lavish distribution of Christmas boxes. There is in fact no danger of your forgetting that this is your *bara din*.

Yet what a mockery it is! How unlike the real thing! For what is the children's festival without the children?

Yes, Europeans in India are exiles—voluntary exiles, if you like, but none the less exiles and strangers in a strange land.

And now let us pass on to certain peculiarities in the constitution of European society in India—and please understand I do not include in this the domiciled community, which forms a little class apart. The main peculiarity is the lack of certain important elements. We have already seen that children usually leave India at the age of seven. On the other hand, men do not come to India for work or, as a rule, ladies for a visit till their early twenties, so that there are hardly any big children or very young adults. There is a similar deficiency at the other end of the scale. Most men retire by fifty-five, and thus there are hardly any old people either. Middle age, in fact, predominates.

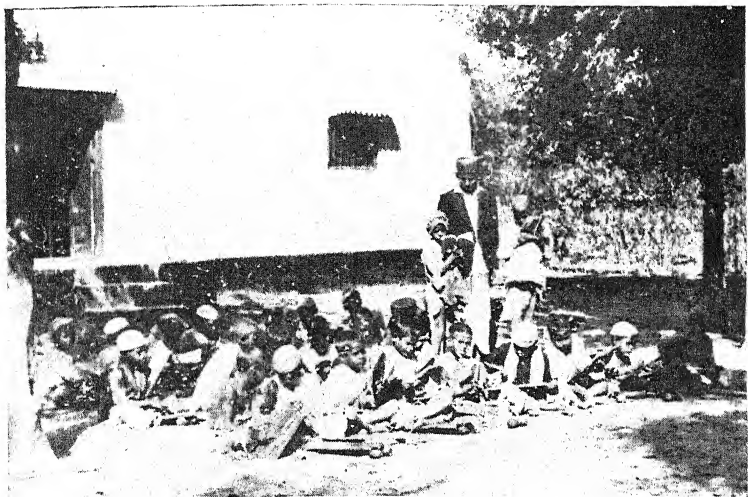
Moreover, generally speaking, all Europeans in India outside the Army are of one class. In rank indeed there is as much difference as between a second-lieutenant and a field-marshal, but all, so to speak, are officers and are treated as belonging to the same social class, the formal recognition of which is the duty of all to call at Government House and the privilege of being invited there.

Nor are there any drones like we see in England, either by compulsion or by choice. For no one comes to settle in India unless he has a job, and no one—or hardly anyone—stays on after his job is over. So each has his job of work, though I would not go so far as to maintain that all are equally industrious.

The effect of all this is to produce a hard, practical, rather uniform society, uninspired by the imagination of youth nor softened by the sentiment of old age.

There is another marked characteristic of European society. Outside a few big commercial cities the overwhelming majority of people are officials. This leads to a kind of snobbery of rank. Your position in society is roughly proportionate to your pay, which can be learned by anyone from the Civil List to the last rupee, but a surer guide is the warrant of precedence, which includes all except those too junior even to be recognized. Let it not be thought that this solemn charter is invoked only at such august functions as banquets at Government House. It must be observed at the smallest station dinner; or mortal offence may be given, especially if the slighted one is a lady.

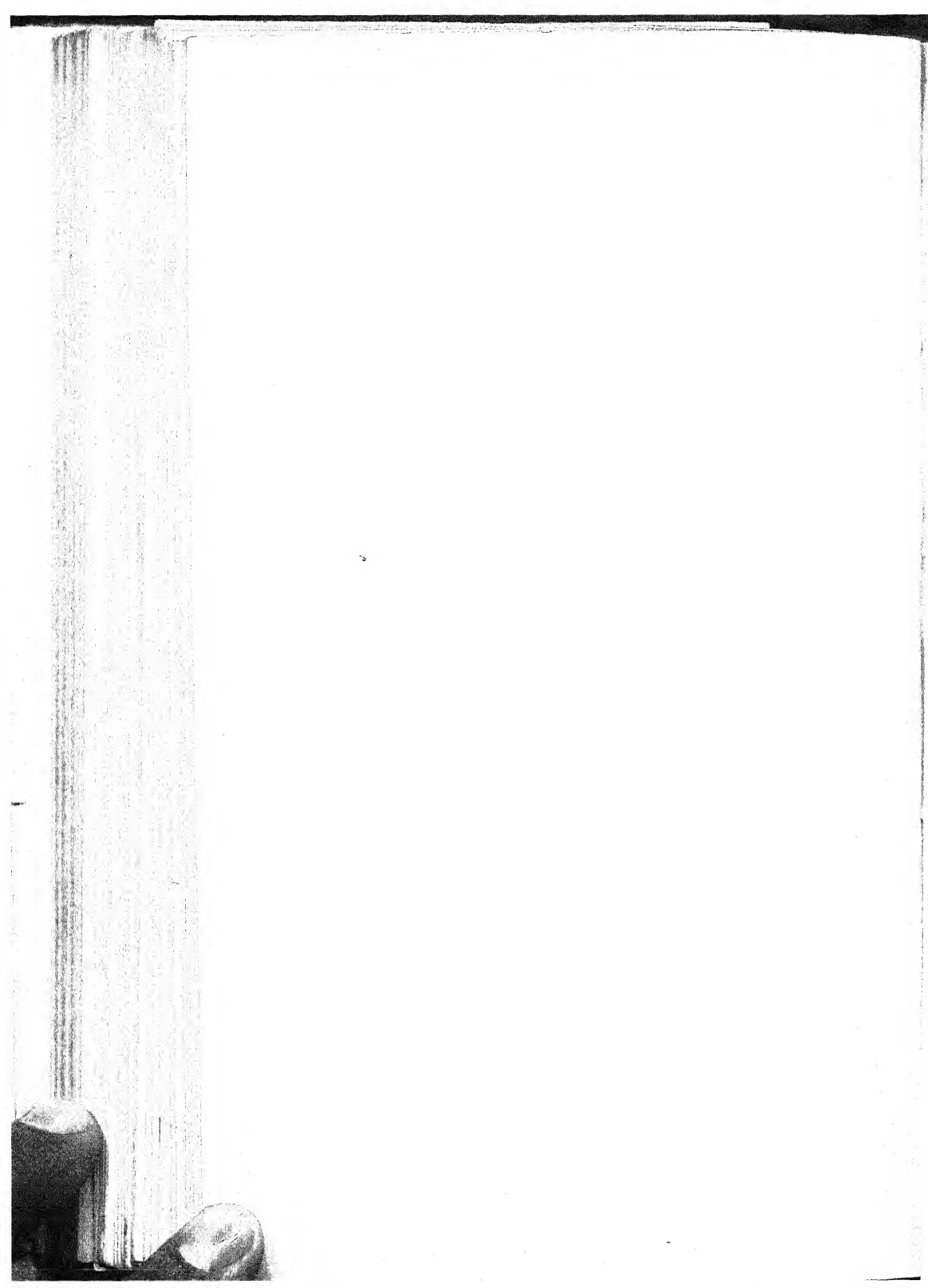
This official bias has another noteworthy effect. The personnel of a station is for ever changing as officers are transferred. In all



A VILLAGE SCHOOL



A HINDI SCHOLAR



Well, that is what happens in India. Let me sketch a mental picture. You are deeply immersed in a complicated and urgent file. Just as you are beginning to get the hang of the abstrusest points a *chaprāsī* enters. Out of the corner of your eye you notice he carries some letters and a book. "Put it on the table," you say, as gentle as possible so as not to disturb the current of your thoughts. The *chaprāsī* plants a letter in front of you. You glance at the envelope. It is addressed to Mrs. Smith. "I'm not Mrs. Smith," you say, pushing the letter away, rather less gently.

"Then which of these letters is for your Honour?" asks the *chaprāsī*, handing you a sheaf.

You select your own, and returning the rest to the *chaprāsī*, give your attention once more to your file.

But still the *chaprāsī* is not satisfied. "Your signature's wanted," he says, proffering you the book.

You sign the annoying thing and give it back to the *chaprāsī*. "Is there any reply?" he asks.

You tear the envelope open. It is a long screed. You hardly look at it. "I'll send a reply later," you say.

At last your tormentor retreats and leaves you with your file. You struggle manfully to bring back your thoughts to where they were when you were interrupted, and have almost succeeded when the *chik* of the door is moved aside and your *chaprāsī* reappears, carrying another sheaf of letters and a book of the same hated pattern. You drop your pencil and with difficulty restrain a shriek. "What, will the line stretch out to the crack of doom?" Almost—at any rate so long as you remain in India.

But, of course, there is another side to the picture. Someone must write those letters and you are probably as bad an offender as any in this respect.

But all the letters that you write are not for sahibs. Nor do you write them all willingly. Your bearer, for instance, announces that one of the servants' children is ill. "Take him to the hospital," you say.

"A letter is necessary," comes the reply.

Or you want to send a letter to the post-office to be registered. Your messenger demands a letter for the babu too. Or perhaps you want some screws from the bazaar or some soda-water from



the club. It's all the same. Invariably a letter is demanded. In fact you spend your time in India writing, writing, writing.

And now I come to those two qualities for which the sahib is notorious—laziness and bad temper. Is the reputation true? Or just a libel? Does India really change us so?

First as to laziness. We, who have been in India, must indeed plead guilty to certain practices which seem to support this accusation. A sahib in fact never does anything which anyone else can do for him. A whole army of servants wait upon him hand and foot: he is dressed and sometimes even undressed by his bearer: he never carries the smallest parcel nor does a stroke of work in the garden beyond cursing the *mālī*. And yet for all that it is hardly fair to call him lazy. Say rather that he conforms to the custom of the country. He could indeed scarcely behave otherwise if he desired. His attendants will see to that. If he attempts to carry a book from one room to another, a *chaprāsī* snatches it from his hands: if he were to dress without his bearer's aid, his bearer would feel sorely hurt; if he were to pull up a weed or dig a clod, his *mālī* would think him even madder than before.

If further justification is required, you can find it in the climate. In the hot weather and the rains at any rate the sahib has not so much energy that he can afford to waste a single ounce of it. To save it up for more important things is surely not laziness but wisdom.

And is there any truth in that choleric caricature of a colonel, red as a boiled lobster and breathing blasphemy and thunder, which we meet so often in our plays and comic papers?

An element perhaps. Whisky is not good for the complexion nor India for the temper; and many sahibs, I fear, rave at their servants or subordinates sometimes and a few habitually.

But let us not be too censorious. Imagine the circumstances. Let me depict a typical occurrence. The temperature stands at over 100 and has reached that height every day for weeks, and you are at home in your office poring over a tantalisingly cool effusion from the Olympic heights, when your punkah, which has long shown signs of flagging, stops altogether. You break into a sweat, you shout out "*Khēncho*." There is no response. You shout again. And yet again. Still there is no response. You decide to

investigate. You open the door which you have kept carefully shut to protect your room from the still fiercer heat outside. A hot blast strikes upon your face. But otherwise the verandah is deserted. You shout for a *chaprāsī*. Again there is no response. In desperation you proceed to the servants' quarters and there at last you discover someone who unearths the punkah-puller for you. He explains that his time was up and the next man had not come, so he went off to look for him. Your *chaprāsī* also has an excellent reason for his absence. He was thirsty and went to get a drink. You try to express your feelings in a foreign language at which you are really not very fluent. Is it strange that you explode? Even the Angel Gabriel might get a little ruffled in such circumstances. So if men's tempers get somewhat frayed in India, do not be too hard on them.

There remains one point, a delicate one which I have hesitated to touch on—the attitude of the European to the Indian. But omission to mention it at all might leave a wrong impression. Let me just say that nowadays few Europeans are guilty of racial arrogance in their treatment of Indians. Instances there may be of discourtesy, but they are the exception, not the rule. The picture of the European community drawn in such books as *A Passage to India* is no longer remotely true. Once it may have been legitimate satire but now it is gross libel.

*The Physical Conditions.* First and foremost and overshadowing—I should have liked to say 'oversunning'—everything else is the climate. I have already described the seasons in the chapter on 'An Indian District' from what I may call the meteorological standpoint. I will now take a more personal point of view, and endeavour to show how the climate affects those who have to live in it.

To be fair to India I will begin with the most pleasant part—the cold weather, which you will remember lasts from November to March. During this season rain is so exceptional that not even the most humdrum conversationalist would descend to a remark about the fineness of the day; and you can plan your open-air functions and parties with almost complete confidence in the weather. The cold weather indeed is the salvation of residents in

India, and without this season for recuperation they could hardly survive. Let me then give the cold weather its full due. But having done so let me also make a few reservations.

Do you know that you can have too many even fine days? That may seem unintelligible to anyone who has never been out of England, but even fine weather can become monotonous. When day after day cloudless sky succeeds cloudless sky, you get a bit weary of it and would rather have a little rain, if only to make you appreciate the bright weather when it came back again.

And in India even in the cold weather you must take no liberties with the sun, for its rays are still near enough to the vertical to be more penetrating than they ever are in England. So unless the sun is very low, the wise man never ventures out of doors without a *sola topi* to protect his head and spine. A *topi*, as all my readers know, is a sun-helmet; but '*sola*' is not, as some of my readers may perhaps imagine, my spelling of '*solar*'. '*Sola*' has nothing to do with the sun, but is the name of a plant from whose pith a *topi* is made. Not that there is only one kind of *topi*: there are many, their usefulness generally varying in inverse proportion to their beauty.

The only other reservation I have to make about the cold weather is that it is not long enough. The official cold weather—that is to say, the period within which the Government provide no funds for the pulling of *punkahs*—lasts for half the year, from October 15 to April 15, but in private houses—and, I fear, in those parts of Government offices where the European sits—the *punkah* season usually extends a fortnight or so in each direction.

But if you treat the sun with respect during the cold weather, you treat it as an enemy during the hot. Indeed soon after the Englishman arrives in India, he performs a complete *volte-face* in his attitude towards the sun. Instead of regarding it as the diffuser of all that is bright and lovely, he thinks of it as a malignant deity whom he must outwit by every conceivable device: winter, not summer, becomes the acme of the year: songs like '*I dream of a garden of sunshine*' lose their meaning; æstivation takes the place of hibernation.

You can never forget the hot weather. When present, it weighs you down in a permanent state of stupor and irritability: when

past, its memory haunts you like a nightmare; when impending, the anticipation fills you with foreboding.

But how can I describe it to those who have never experienced it? It is almost as difficult as trying to describe a perfume to one who has never smelt it. A mere statement of the heat's effect upon the mercury in a thermometer will not convey an adequate impression of its effect on the human body; nor will similes about ovens or hothouses really help to make my reader feel the heat. Perhaps I can describe the heat's effects most vividly by showing you a sahib actually in the throes of it, though even so you will have to make full use of your imagination.

Let us imagine then that it is the beginning of June and six o'clock in the morning. Our sahib is sitting on his bed with the ends of the mosquito-net thrown over the cross-bars at the top of the wooden frame so as to form a sort of roof. The bed is pitched in the middle of the brown lawn, and the sahib is eating his *chhota bāzīrī*, consisting of tea, hard toast and an over-ripe banana. It is not really very hot at present, but in spite of that he is looking rather jaded.

The fact is he has had a miserable night, for although there is a jost fan on the table by his side and his bed has no mattress and, except for his flimsy pyjamas, his only covering has been a sheet over his vulnerable stomach, yet he has found it so stifling within the close-meshed net that he got no sleep till the comparatively cool hours of the early morning.

And the irony of it is that although the net was effective enough in keeping out the air, it failed to keep out the mosquitoes. What happened to most of them you can tell by the little blood-stains on the palms of his hands. The blood is his own, rescued from the mosquitoes. One eluded him all night and still survives, entangled in the folds of the net.

Yes, the sahib is feeling pretty jaded, and wondering how he is to get through the daily grind.

In the next scene we see him sitting under a punkah in his dressing-room with nothing on except a towel round his middle. He is trying to dry the sweat caused by the exertion of 'drying' himself after his bath.

Soon after eight we see him wearing a tropical suit and sitting

in his office (at home, I mean), still beneath a punkah. He has been here some time struggling with files or receiving visitors, but I have chosen this moment because a servant is now closing all the exterior doors and windows. His object is to shut out the heat, for by now the atmosphere outside has grown so hot that it must be kept out at all costs.

The closing of those doors and windows is significant. Who ever closes his doors and windows in England to keep out the heat? No; the hotter it is, the more you open doors and windows to let in the fresh air. But in India there are times when there is no fresh air. So if there is no freshness to exclude, you may as well exclude the heat.

Observe that punkah too as it swings creaking to and fro. It creates a breeze, it is true, but such a hot one! Yet without that punkah the sahib would be incapable of doing any work at all. If it stops for a minute—and when the thong breaks, it stops for many minutes—the sahib suffers what with little exaggeration may be called torment, so oppressive is the heat.

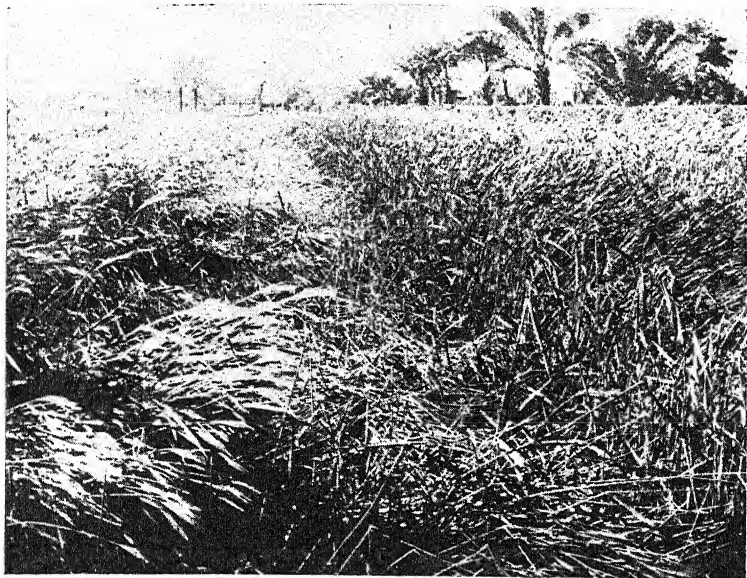
Let the clock advance again, say two hours and a half. It is time to go to the public office. This gives us a chance of seeing what it is like outside. As the sahib steps into the verandah, he is assailed by a scorching blast, for the *lū*, the Indian sirocco, is raging fiercely; and as he drives along the road, he has to hold his handkerchief before his mouth and nose to protect them from thick clouds of dust raised by other vehicles.

Mercifully we can get through the day quicker than the poor sahib. So let the clock go on for another five hours or so. The sahib is sitting in his drawing-room at tea. Here there are Western doors, and the *tattis* are working hard. The sahib is grateful for the comparative coolness of the air, but wishes that its dampness were not so enervating.

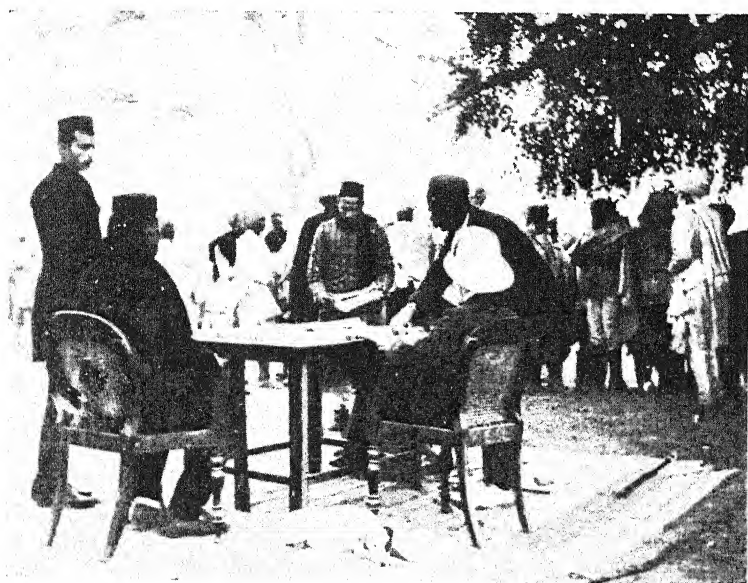
Two hours later the sun is setting. The room is filled with a loud buzzing noise. It is the war-cry of the mosquitoes who have lain hidden behind curtains and clothes and in wardrobes and drawers during the hours of sunlight and have now sallied forth, seeking whom they may devour.

But the sahib does not worry much about them yet. He too rejoices at the retreat of their common enemy, the sun. At last



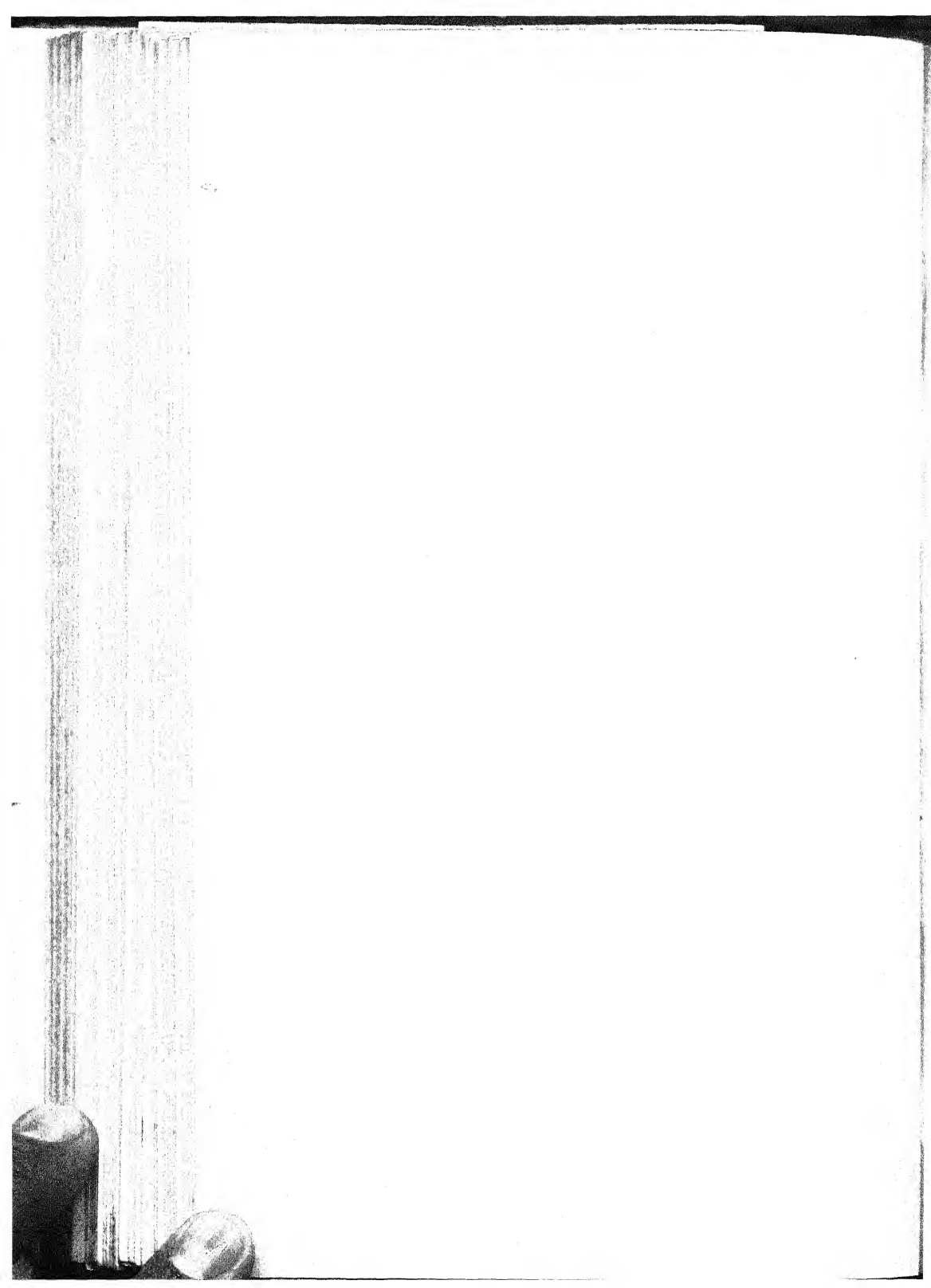


A WHEAT FIELD AFTER HAIL



DISTRIBUTION OF LOANS TO PEASANTS





the time has come to open doors and windows, and in true British fashion the sahib sets out to take some exercise.

Yet somehow he does not derive much satisfaction from it. For whether he chooses to walk along the dusty roads and parched fields, or to play golf on the hard, baked maidan, or tennis on a mud court with balls which the ground has made the same colour as itself, he returns home tired out and sweating and only too ready for his bath.

Then comes a picking at unappetizing food—no self-respecting vegetable will grow at this time of this year—a long chair in the open with a long, iced drink by his side and, last of all, bed.

Let us hope the sahib will have a better night than last.

Before the next scene a week elapses. There is the bed we saw before and in the same old place upon the lawn, but instead of being daybreak it is midnight. The sahib is lying on the bed, but not asleep. Instead he is listening to a roar which momentarily gets louder, and looking intently towards the west where the stars are blotted out by a great mass of darkness. He knows the signs too well. A dust-storm is approaching.

"*Koi hai!*" he shouts, and two or three servants, already wakened by the disturbance, come running up. By now the mosquito-net is flapping wildly in the wind and, leaving the servants to bring his bed and table, the sahib hastens towards the house.

But before he reaches there a cloud of thick, blinding, rushing dust falls upon him and, as it sweeps on, strikes his face, fills his hair and penetrates his eyes, ears, nose and mouth.

Inside the house he finds a servant already shutting all the windward doors and windows, but it would require something far better fitting than those warped frames to bar the way to such insistence, and myriads of specks of dust find their way within.

Meanwhile the bed arrives and a man begins to pull the punkah, but in such a dense, irritating atmosphere sleep is out of the question. So the sahib lies awake instead, speculating how many days it will take to clean the house and make his papers bearable to touch.

A month passes, bringing us to the middle of July; and then we have a more pleasant scene. It is the late afternoon, and the sahib is in his drawing-room. It is still hot, and the punkah is

still going and the doors and windows are still shut, though the khus-khus screens have been removed as the *lū* has ceased to blow. Once more the sahib is evidently expecting something, but what he is looking at now is a mass of electric cloud and what he is listening to is the distant boom of thunder and the direction is the south-west and the anticipation obviously gives him joy.

A little later heavy drops of rain begin to fall, then more and more and faster and faster until the very heavens seem to open and hurl down such a deluge as is never seen in England.

The doors are flung open and sahib and servants stand in the verandah, taking in the liquid freshness with eyes and ears and nose and lungs, and all pulsing with the one absorbing feeling: "The monsoon's come. The hot weather's over, over, over!"

I wish I could have ended on that pleasant note. It would have been dramatic, but not, unfortunately, true. So once more the curtain must go up, this time for the last scene, though this is divided into two parts—the first a very brief one.

Three weeks have passed. It is midday in the sahib's compound. The clouds have disappeared and the sun is shining as brightly as ever, but the air, instead of being dried up, is sodden with moisture. That is why you see the sahib's clothes and books all spread out in the sun. It is to save them from rot and mildew. A break in the rains has at any rate that advantage.

Now for the other side of the picture. Let us see how the sahib, and not his belongings, is affected. When the second part of the scene begins, it has grown dark and the sahib is having dinner in the verandah. He no longer looks relieved, but every now and then he inserts a finger within his shirt and scratches viciously. If you could see his bare chest you would see it was covered with ugly, red patches. He has got prickly heat, which drives him nearly mad with irritation. It has been caused by his having been for the last week or so in a bath of perspiration. For the air, though hot enough to make the sahib perspire, is too saturated to absorb his perspiration. And now he is wondering whether on the whole it was not better to be baked than boiled.

And that is not his only torment. His petrol-lamp is placed so far away that he is in half-darkness, but even so his table is covered with wings and black, creeping insects. These are flying-

ants whose wings seem to have been given to them to last just long enough to take them to the sahib's table. There they shed them and continue their course on foot. Some of them land on the sahib's hands and face and clothes and some find their way into the soup.

He can bear it no more. "Bring my dinner into the house," he shouts as he retreats.

But I really cannot end there. After all, it is a non-stop performance. So let us move on three months more and return to our original scene, the cold weather; and by way of comfort let us remember that this scene, though less full of weather-incidents and therefore shorter to describe, represents a longer period than any of the other scenes I have depicted.

And now let us say good-bye to the weather for a time and pass on to the next item of the 'physical conditions'. It bears the cheery title of 'pests'.

Perhaps some people in England still imagine that the pests of India consist of tigers, snakes, scorpions, centipedes, and other horrors, dear to the heart of the tellers of eastern stories.

If so, let me say that the difficulty is to find a tiger, not avoid one; and though snakes and scorpions are plentiful and centipedes not uncommon, and though the bite of some snakes is fatal and the sting of a scorpion or the bite of a centipede is painful in the extreme, yet the use of elementary precautions renders the chance of such a catastrophe so remote that the danger from these creatures can hardly be held seriously to affect the European's life.

No, the real pest of India for the European is something which has its counterpart in England and is a byword for insignificance, the little gnat, though we dignify him in India with the more ominous name of mosquito.

Why do I select the mosquito as the European's pest *par excellence*?

In the first place you just cannot avoid mosquitoes altogether. All India swarms with them. Not a house is free from them. Wherever there is a drop of stagnant water—and where is there not?—there they will breed. You may endeavour to destroy the larvæ with oil in your own compound, but some places will cer-

tainly escape you; and in any case your neighbour will breed plenty and to spare.

Not only are mosquitoes everywhere, they are also present nearly the whole year round. For a few months indeed the cold may kill them off, but otherwise they never leave you.

I repeat, you cannot avoid them altogether. You may wear Wellingtons to protect your ankles, but that will not save your face and hands; you may drench yourself and clothes with stuff that mosquitoes ought to hate, but there will certainly be one or two with eccentric tastes; you may shut yourself inside a net, but even if you do not shut in a few mosquitoes too, some will almost certainly discover a tear large enough for the passage of their tiny bodies.

The first ground then for the mosquito's claim to be the pest of pests in India is that no one is free from its attack. The other ground is the seriousness of its sting or threat to sting.

Yes, even its threat is serious. It is this threat which makes you shut yourself within a suffocating net and keep jabbing at the mosquito that gets inside and sings around your head. In this way the mosquito often robs you of your sleep.

Usually a mosquito's actual sting results merely in an irritating lump which, though unpleasant enough, could not be magnified into a serious calamity; but sometimes it has a far more potent result and infects its victims with one of the most weakening and persistent of all diseases—malarial fever.

So serious, however, is this danger that I have reserved it for discussion among the problems of India, and for the present I will say no more of the mosquito except that he is one of those things which no one in India can afford to despise.

Though no other creature will harass the sahib to an extent comparable with the mosquito, still there are others which, taken in the mass, deserve some mention. In particular there are the creeping, crawling, flying creatures that attain their hey-day in the rains.

We have already had a glimpse of the flying-ants, but they are only a part of the mighty host that, attracted by the light, assemble in their thousands to torment the sahib. No part of his anatomy is free from their attention. On his face and hands, up his trouser-

legs, through the opening in his shirt, down the back of his neck, everywhere they find their way, irritating him almost beyond bearing.

Most offensive of all is a little black flying-beetle. I have no idea of what its scientific name may be, but it surely cannot be half so expressive as its popular one—the Calcutta Violet, *alias* the Stink-bug. Every now and then thousands of these appear and play a devilish game. They swarm all over the sahib and dare him to touch them. If he accepts the challenge, they emit a nauseating smell: if he does not, they plague him till he does. So it is heads the stink-bug wins and tails the sahib loses; and the game can end in only one way—the retirement of the sahib behind closed doors and windows.

If the mosquito is Harasser No. 1 of the sahib's person, the white ant deserves the corresponding title with regard to his property.

We have already come across this creature in a disguised form, for the flying-ant, that left its wings in the sahib's soup, was a member of a white ants' colony at the swarming stage. But that is an exceptional activity. What I wish to stress now is its destructive habits.

First, however, a few words of general explanation. The white ant is not really an ant at all, but a kind of termite. It is a tiny, white, rather maggoty-looking creature, and lives in large, crowded nests beneath the ground. Wood and paper seem to be its staple food. These creatures cannot stand the light, but they overcome this handicap not by staying underground but by shielding themselves with a tunnel which they construct out of the material along which they pass: and the tell-tale, narrow, brown lines standing out from the walls are an only too familiar sight in an Indian house or building.

If these lines of advance are detected soon enough, no harm worth mentioning is done, but if their occupants reach the beams, they cause more destruction than the death-watch beetle, and the beams attacked will have to be replaced if the roof is to be saved.

But beams are not their only objective, nor do they always make their tunnels where they can easily be observed. They may come straight up from the floor through the bottom of a box or ward-



robe, and to prevent this it is customary to raise boxes and legless furniture on bricks.

But no precautions avail to check them wholly, and every now and then by climbing, it may be, behind cover and attacking receptacles and their contents from the rear or in some other way they manage to elude you, and one day when you take down a treasured volume from your shelves, you find that cover and pages have been cruelly mutilated or perhaps that there is no paper left at all.

To exterminate an army of white ants is a hard task. The creatures caught above the ground can be easily destroyed by simple exposure to the light, but others will merely take their place unless you capture the bloated monstrosity which Europeans call the queen, and Indians (with strange perversity) the raja. She, however, may live six feet below the surface or even underneath your house.

Finally I must mention a class of creatures which are never seen by the sahib and rarely attack him, but nevertheless instil in his mind such a wholesome dread of themselves that they materially affect his habits. You have guessed what I mean? Germs.

In India indeed, with its people so utterly unconcerned with sanitation, they enjoy a veritable paradise.

Chief of these germs are the generators of cholera and typhoid, and it is fear of these that makes the sahib boil his milk and drinking water, use soda-water in the train to clean his teeth, disinfect his strawberries—when he gets any—with permanganate of potash and decline aspic or any other likely harbourer of germs at any place where the culinary arrangements are not above suspicion.

Small things in their way, but their cumulative effect is to give the sahib's brain a twist and make him what I may call germ-minded.

*The Lack of Amenities.* In the last part I have shown what discomforts and inconveniences the European in India suffers from Nature; in this part I shall deal mainly with those due to the shortcomings of man.

In India there exist several civilizations side by side, notably the indigenous Hindu civilization and the exotic European one. Everyone knows how time has left Hinduism almost undisturbed, but fewer realize how far Western civilization in India lags behind its counterpart in Europe. While developing the country so much in many ways it is remarkable how little Europeans have done for the advancement of their own comfort. In India Europeans are so few and scattered that they cannot reasonably hope for the same amenities as their brethren in England, but sometimes I wonder whether the European's life in India is not unnecessarily primitive. What would have happened if Americans or Germans had run the country? Would they have been content with the British standard of comfort?

In the previous chapter I have already dealt with the inconveniences of the house. Let me now describe under five heads the other drawbacks from which the European in India suffers: food, shops, medical arrangements, travelling, and culture.

*Food.* Most of my readers, I expect, have belonged to queer kinds of clubs at some time or other, but how many of those, who have not been to India, have ever belonged to a mutton club? Of such a club I became a member not very long after landing in India.

What happened was this. Somebody, yearning for the juicy flesh of a Southdown sheep, desired to get the nearest equivalent possible in India. So, having calculated the number of joints into which a sheep can be divided, he founded a club and invited membership up to that number. We paid our subscriptions, a sheep was bought and fattened up and slaughtered and distributed. I received a leg. I do not remember how much it cost me, but my impression is that it was an amount which would make an English housewife scream. The disintegration of the sheep marked also the dissolution of the club.

That little story may give you an idea of the quality of meat which the resident of a small station has normally to endure. Most Indian mutton is goat, and whether it be sheep or goat, is usually of a stringiness and toughness that no self-respecting English butcher would tolerate. Beef is not everywhere procurable in

a land where the cow is sacred, and in any case is no better than the mutton, while as for pork no one would dream of touching the Indian domestic pig, compared with which its English cousin is a very model of cleanliness. Ham indeed the sahib gets sometimes from England, but it costs him an enormous price, and is a luxury which can be indulged in only on great occasions, such as Christmas. You can buy an Indian chicken for eight annas (*9d.*), but it is not fit to be mentioned in the same breath as the English bird; and its eggs are only half the size of English ones.

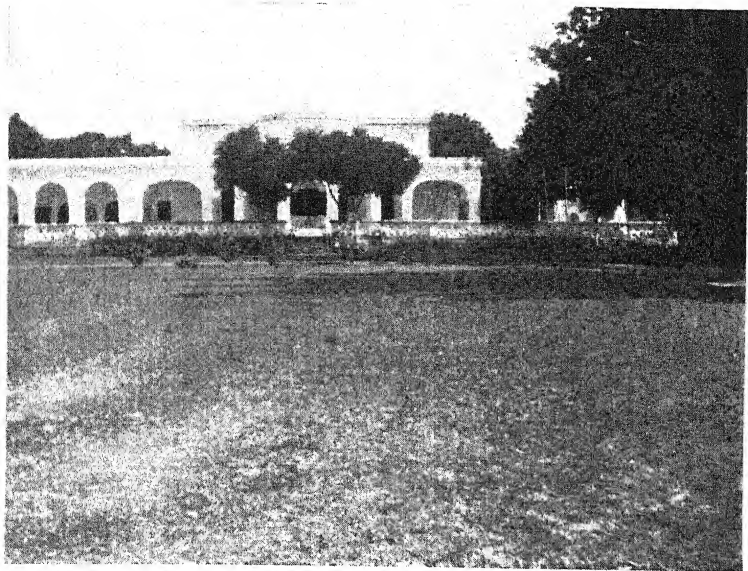
On the other hand, it must be admitted that in India game, though getting scarcer, is far more commonly available than in England, and pigeon, partridge, quail, snipe, duck and geese and even the fabulous peacock, all appear fairly often on the table during the cold weather, and quail are kept in pits during the hot weather too.

Appetizing vegetables are not obtainable in the bazaar but come from the sahib's own garden. Unfortunately the season is all too short, and for a great part of the year the sahibs have to put up with such second-rate products as *brinjal* and lady's finger.

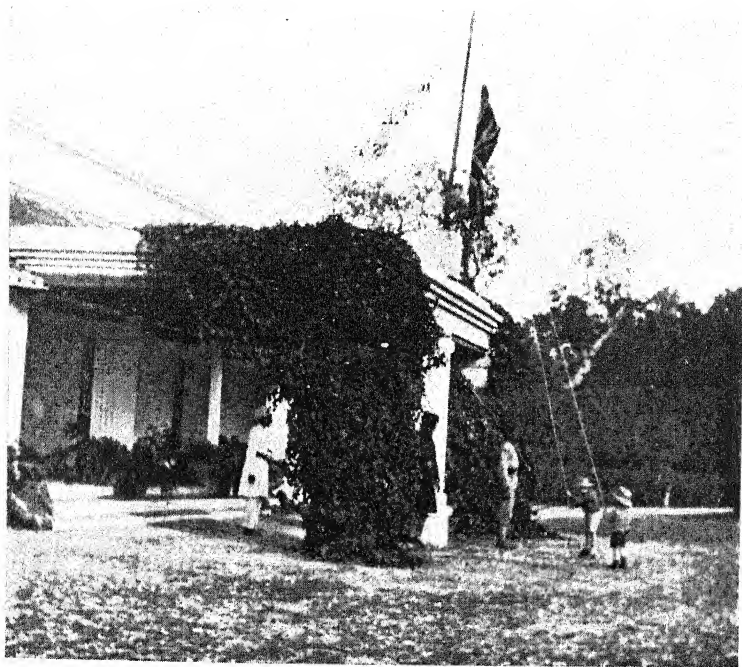
In respect of fruit too India is disappointing. She has undoubtedly some good fruits hardly known in England, such as the mango and *lichī*, and here and there grows good bananas, melons and oranges, but the Britisher sadly misses the apples, pears, plums and the various kinds of currants and berries that, with the exception of strawberrie. in a few favoured places, cannot face the heat of the Indian plains. In the hills indeed orchards of an English kind are to be found, but the fruit stands the journey too badly, especially in the hot weather, to make it worth while to order it in the plains.

For delicacies the sahib usually depends on tinned foods—tinned soups, tinned meat, tinned fish, tinned fruit, tinned vegetables, especially the inevitable accompaniment of all station dinners, tinned asparagus.

*Shops.* In England shopping is a joy for a woman and a convenience for a man, but in India the resident of a small station hardly ever enters a shop at all. For in most small stations there are no shops within Civil Lines. So if you want to buy anything



BACK OF A DISTRICT OFFICER'S BUNGALOW



HOISTING THE FLAG





you have a choice of three methods. Either you can send a servant to get it locally—that is, from the bazaar, or the club, or the railway refreshment-room; or you can order it from some big city, such as Calcutta or Bombay, or from England; or you can wait till you go to England or a place where there are shops of a European kind. In practice this usually means that you get your ordinary day-to-day things locally, except for periodical consignments of stores from Calcutta or Bombay, buy your good clothes in England and have your rough ones made by the *darzi*, and order nearly all your other things by post.

Even in quite big stations the shops are by no means universal providers; and I remember combing the capital of a certain province in vain, for such an ordinary article as a covered jam-dish, and how at Christmas-time I searched an even larger station for anything at all likely to find favour with a child.

So if you need anything special you are usually driven to ordering it by post. For this purpose catalogues are hoarded up, and when the need arises the article, of which the description sounds most suitable, is selected and the order sent. Buying by description, however, is not ideal and when at length the eagerly expected article arrives by V.P.P. (value payable post, the Indian equivalent of C.O.D.), it is not always quite what was anticipated.

From this dearth of shops springs a habit which many sahibs acquire of never carrying any money in their pockets. If any urgent need arises they rely upon their bearer.

*Medical Arrangements.* In England it is your privilege to select your doctor and your duty to pay him, but in an ordinary Indian station most sahibs neither enjoy the privilege nor, as far as themselves are concerned, are required to discharge the duty. For in most stations the only doctor adequately qualified according to European standards is the civil surgeon, and most European officers, though not their families, are entitled to his services free.

Most sahibs, however, would prefer to have a choice of doctors even though they had to pay for it. I do not suggest that the civil surgeons as a body are incompetent. On the contrary the personnel includes highly qualified and highly efficient members of the Indian and Royal Army Medical Services. But on the other hand



there are also members of the Provincial Medical Service, some of whom hardly reach the same high standard.

For the mem-sahib too lady doctors are unknown, such lady doctors as there are devoting their whole time to mission hospitals.

If a general practitioner is not enough, and a resident of the United Provinces desires to consult a specialist, he will have to go as far afield as Calcutta. Even a dentist is so rare that the need of his attention is a recognized ground for leave.

Moreover you may be taken ill in camp twenty or thirty miles from headquarters. In that case you must be your own doctor unless your illness is so serious as to justify calling the civil surgeon. To help you treat yourself there is a useful book first written by Sir William Moore in 1872, but since revised. Still even 'Old Moore', useful though it is, is a poor substitute for a real doctor.

*Travelling.* When I include travelling among the subjects in respect of which the European in India suffers from lack of amenities, I do not refer to travelling by train; for although a railway carriage in the hot weather is the nearest approach to an oven that I have experienced, yet an Indian first-class carriage is far more commodious than an English one, and the seats, being intended for sleeping-berths, are long enough to lie on at full length. What I refer to then is travelling by road.

By way of contrast let us imagine first a typical instance of what might happen to a motorist in England who intended to make a journey of several hundred miles. As a preliminary he obtains a detailed route from the Automobile Association and then consults his own maps. His plans complete, he sets out one morning and after driving a couple of hours or so he notices that his petrol is running low, so stops at a pump and has his tank filled. His lunch he takes at an old-world country inn. In the afternoon some slight trouble arises with his car, so either he invokes the help of an A.A. man or has the matter put right at a garage. At nightfall he feels he has gone far enough and finds another pleasant inn at which to spend the night; and in the morning, newly refreshed, he starts out on his journey once more.

Now that could not have happened to a motorist in India. In

the first place there is no association to prepare him a route, and he has not even got a motoring-map. The thing most resembling a motoring-map I ever saw in the United Provinces was a Government production of most unwieldy size and on the minutest of scales. Strange, is it not, that in a province where the village records contain a plan of every field you cannot get a respectable motoring-map?

Next, if our friend's petrol ran short he might well have to go twenty miles or so before he could get even a tinful.

Nor could he hope to pick up lunch on the way, nor leave his resting-place to chance. The only places providing for the traveller that he would find would be an occasional inspection or dak bungalow, but he could not occupy an inspection bungalow without obtaining previous permission, nor could he procure any food there, and even at a dak bungalow he would certainly find no food prepared if he had not given warning of his visit.

The trouble in his car he would probably have to see to himself as best he could, for he would find no guardian angels patrolling the road, nor (unless he happened to pass through a big town) a garage of any kind.

From all of which you may infer that motoring in India is a business, not a pleasure.

*Culture.* I come now to the most serious deficiency of all. So far I have dealt with matters merely affecting the sahib's physical comfort: in this part we are concerned with things from the lack of which his mental and æsthetic development may suffer.

For mental food and stimulus the educated European depends above all on books. But how hard they are to come by in India! There are no public libraries of modern books from which the resident of the small station can borrow. In the old days he depended on the club library, but nowadays in many stations there is no European club left at all, and in most of the others the membership and funds are so depleted as to make it impossible to acquire an appreciable number of new books. So if you wish to read a book you must as a rule buy it. But no small station can provide a bookshop, so you will have to order the book from somewhere else. That in itself is sufficient to deter most people

from habitual reading of modern books. But another difficulty arises, the difficulty of knowing what books are worth reading. Reviews, of course, anyone can read even in India, but the sahib, unlike his more fortunate brother in England, is for the most part cut off from the two other main sources of information about books—browsing in bookshops and conversation with others of the same intellectual interests.

Even in England most of us do not visit museums and picture-galleries overmuch. But when you have no chance of doing so, you realize the need. One or two small local museums indeed there are in the United Provinces, but none there that could claim to be representative of India or even the province: and in that great territory there is not a single picture-gallery.

To descend to a lower plane, there is no professional theatre in the whole province, and only the large stations can boast even of a cinema.

Nor does the wireless do much to fill up the gap. Few sahibs indeed possess a set at all, partly because of the difficulties of acquisition and maintenance and partly because India is not well served in respect of programmes.

Well, you will say, what about the Taj Mahal and Fatehpur Sikri? Are not buildings like those an inspiration? Undoubtedly India does possess some magnificent buildings, but they are all too rare. In fact in the United Provinces they are almost confined to Lucknow, the old capital of the kings of Oudh, and Agra, the old capital of the Moghul emperors, and its neighbourhood. And outside the few show-places public buildings and private houses alike are for the most part devoid of anything worthy of the name of architecture.

And so, denied the external aids of cultural development, the sahib runs a grave danger of becoming absorbed in his own immediate interests to the exclusion of all others and eventually furnishing one more example of the popular idea that every man retired from India is a philistine and a bore.

*Compensations.* Yet India is not merely a land of regrets, it is also a land of compensations. It has something to offer to many kinds of tastes and temperaments.

Perhaps the wealth of India allures you? Well, no fabulous fortune awaits the official now, and the sahib is apt to yearn for the days when the rupee was worth 2s., not 1s. 6d. as now, and when there were no tariffs to swell the prices of European goods, and to complain of the expense of maintaining extra establishments for his wife in the hills or his children in England. Still when all is said and done, the superior official in India is well paid. A member of the Indian Civil Service, for instance, may count on drawing after twenty-five years or so at least Rs3,000 a month (say, £2,700 a year); and if he prefers to retire early, he may after twenty-five years' nominal, and considerably less active, service receive a pension of £1,000 a year. The members of other services are not paid so well, but even so their pay compares most favourably with what they would obtain in England.

Or perhaps you aspire to honours? If so, you stand a fair chance of winning some suffix to your name, at any rate if you stay on your full time. And should your ambitions soar to knighthood, here is the most certain recipe of which I know. Enter the Indian Civil Service, plump for the judicial branch, rise to the High Court and you will be able to calculate almost to the day the morning on which you will awake as 'Sir So-and-So'. Once the first hurdle is surmounted, the rest is all plain running.

Or it may be that sport is what draws you? In India you may play that most magnificent of all games—polo. True it is that in this era of motor-cars few non-military stations can raise a team, but if you are keen and skilful, you will almost certainly find yourself in a station where you can indulge your taste. Plain riding you may have anywhere.

Or perhaps by sport you mean the chase? Then you will find nothing on earth more thrilling than hunting the pig with your spear. Or you may yearn to match your skill and wits with such worthy foes as the tiger, panther or bear? You may reserve a block in the forest at Christmas and at least have all the excitement of trying. Or if you are content with something quieter, small game may still be found in any district, even though not so plentifully as in the days of restricted licences.

India, in fact, if not exactly a sportman's paradise, belongs at

all events to a much higher sphere than England in the universe of sport.

Or maybe you seek adventure? I cannot indeed promise you Adventure with a big A, such as you read of in the magazines and novels—the mysterious fakirs, the deep-plotting rajas, and the dauntless secret-service agents. But it is a bit of an adventure to go to India at all and cut adrift from all the old associations and start life afresh in a strange land and among a strange people: and even after the first glamour has died away life in India retains an element of romance with its closeness to nature and its constant calls to face new situations and undertake unfamiliar tasks.

Or perhaps the restraints of Western civilization irk you? You may get into trouble if you take too literally the statement that “there ain’t no ten commandments” in the East, but you will at any rate be free from D.O.R.A., Belisha beacons, Sunday observance societies, and notices that trespassers will be prosecuted.

But I have reserved the finest gift that India offers for the last—the magnitude, the responsibility and the beneficence of the work. To lead life-giving streams to thirsty fields, to foster mighty forests, to build roads and bridges, to minister to the sick, to spread the light of learning, to dispense justice, to maintain peace and order, to strive for the welfare of hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of people—these are tasks which by their mere fulfilment provide ample recompense for any hardships that may be involved in their performance. Therein lies the great compensation, the genuine satisfaction that India can give to those who devote themselves to her service.



## CHAPTER VII

### SOME ASPECTS OF INDIAN SOCIETY

#### Caste—The Position of Women—Religious Festivals

THIS chapter is not an attempt to analyse Indian society: that would require a vast volume to itself. All that it aspires to do is to sketch three outstanding features of that society—caste, the position of women, and religious festivals. The first relates to Hindus alone, the second and third to Muslims also.

*Caste.* If any one with any knowledge of India were asked what is the most prominent characteristic of Hindu society, he would undoubtedly reply "Caste". In the form indeed in which the system appears in India the system is unique, dividing all Hindus, as it does, into rigid classes and glorifying the higher ones, particularly the Brahmins: so that on the caste in which a man happens to be born depends largely the circle in which he will move and the status which he will enjoy.

According to Manu, the ancient Aryan law-giver, there were originally only four castes: 'Brahmins' or priests, 'Kshatris' or warriors, 'Vaishes' or traders, and 'Sūdras' or servants; but there are now thousands of castes and sub-castes.

The relative numbers of the members of the four main divisions cannot be stated definitely, for it is not clear to which of these divisions some of the present-day castes should be assigned, the claims of certain castes to be branches of Brahmins or Kshatris being disputable. But, roughly speaking, it may be said that out of a total Hindu population of two hundred and thirty-nine millions, fifteen millions are Brahmins, eleven millions Kshatris, five millions Vaishes and two hundred and eight millions Sūdras. The outstanding fact is that the lower castes, included in the generic name of Sūdras, form the huge majority.

The castes and sub-castes, as they exist to-day, have multifarious



origins—some are based on race, some on occupation or qualification, and some on country of origin. Thus the 'Dūbe', 'Trivēdi' and 'Chaubē' Brahmins are reputed to know by heart two, three, or four of the *Vēdas*, or Hindu holy books, respectively; Rājputs or Thākurs, as Kshatris are now usually called, are divided into various clans according to their claim to have descended from the sun, moon or fire-god; the 'Mārwāri' Vaishes owe their designation to 'Mārwar', which is another name for Jodhpur; while among the Sūdras some castes are synonymous with professions, such as 'Dhobi' or washerman, 'Sonār' or goldsmith, and 'Kumhār' or potter—an example which has been followed by the Muslims, a 'Qassāb', for instance, being a butcher, a 'Darzī' a tailor, and a 'Julāha' a weaver.

Members of a caste, however, do not necessarily follow its traditional occupation. Thus comparatively few Brahmins are priests, though with insignificant exceptions all priests are Brahmins, and comparatively few Rājputs are soldiers, though the caste is strongly represented in the army.

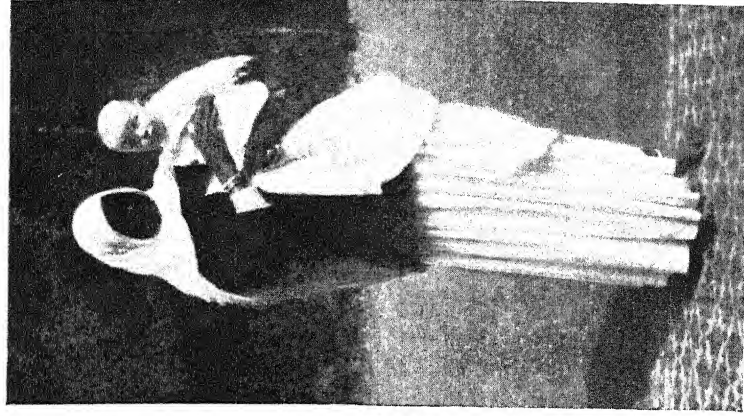
The Brahmins are said to have sprung from the mouth of Brahma the Creator, the Kshatris from his arm, the Vaishes from his thigh, and the Sūdras from his foot.

The ancient Hindu scriptures, being the work of Brahmins, exalt the Brahmins and debase the lower castes in a most extravagant manner; and though the detailed pronouncements may not be taken at their face value to-day, the general effect is to place the Brahmin in a position of overweening superiority irrespective of his profession, wealth or ability.

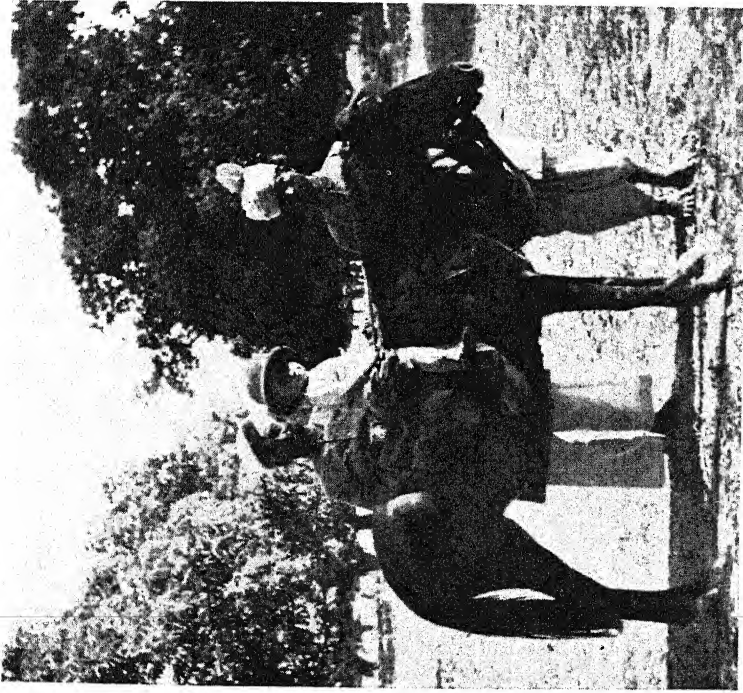
Thus according to Manu: "A Brahmin, coming into existence, is born as the highest on earth, the lord of all created beings, for the protection of the treasury of the law. Whatever exists in the world is the property of the Brahmin; on account of the excellence of his origin the Brahmin is, indeed, entitled to it all. The Brahmin eats but his own food, wears but his own apparel, bestows but his own in alms; other mortals subsist through the benevolence of the Brahmin."<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand: "One occupation only the lord prescribed to the Sudra, to serve meekly even these other three castes:"<sup>2</sup> and

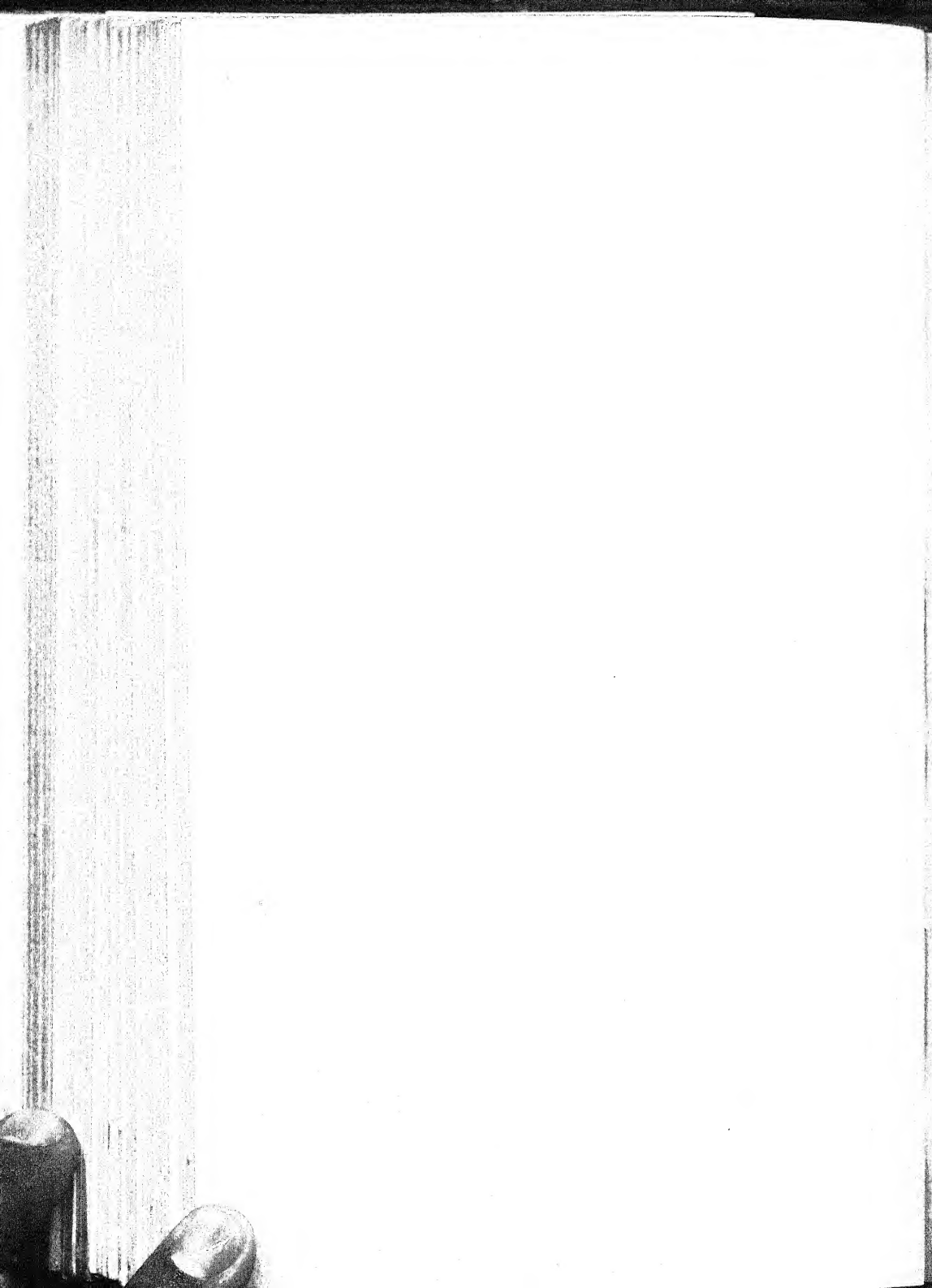
<sup>1</sup> "Laws of Manu," translated by Bühler, I, 99-101.    <sup>2</sup> Ibid., I, 91.



THE AYMI



THE CHIGOTA SAHIB AND STAFF



"A Sudra . . . was created . . . to be the slave of a Brahmin."<sup>1</sup>

Brahmins, Kshatrīs and Vaishes are styled 'twice-born', the second birth being spiritual, and are entitled to wear the sacred thread round their neck, as distinguished from the Sūdras, who are excluded from this privilege.

The Kshatrīs have maintained their position of superiority, second only to the Brahmins, but if some respect still clings to 'Vaish', it is to the name and not to the living representatives of the caste, for 'Banya', as the Vaish is popularly known, has become such a term of reproach for avarice and hard-dealing that out of deference to those so labelled the expression has been officially banned in favour of the original name, 'Vaish'.

The Sūdras include castes of the most varying status. Some of them such as the 'Kayasths', who provide a large proportion of the clerks, or the 'Jāts', who are excellent cultivators and soldiers, are in no way downtrodden, but the same cannot be said of the 'depressed classes' which include such despised castes as the 'Bhangīs', who remove filth, and the 'Chamārs', who handle carcasses and work in leather, though it is not possible to draw a hard and fast line between the 'depressed' and other classes.

The debasement of the depressed classes in actual life is well brought out by the attitude of the higher castes to the Bhangī. You can always tell a Bhangī by the way he keeps clear of other people and they of him lest he should pollute them. Two instances of this idea of spiritual contamination stand out in my memory. Once I was presenting prizes at a school and the managers explained to me, with evident appreciation of their own broad-mindedness, that among the prize-winners was a Bhangī. But when his turn came to receive his prize, he was not allowed to approach me till I insisted. The second instance was still more striking. In my young days I had to attend the execution of a Brahmin, and as he stood upon the scaffold the thought of his impending fate seemed to affect him less than his horror at being touched by a Bhangī-hangman.

Nor is it only in spiritual matters that the depressed classes must take a lowly place. In the ranks of the Government services

<sup>1</sup> "Laws of Manu," VIII, 413.

hardly a member of these classes will be found, and on public bodies they have to depend for representation on the few seats specially reserved for them by the Government.

Nor if caste were wiped out altogether would the depressed classes be able at once to assert themselves in proportion to their numbers. For whether the main cause be that centuries of oppression have crushed their spirit, or that they sprang from inferior stock, or that their education has been neglected, the fact remains that in respect of character and ability the depressed classes are not on the same level as the higher castes.

It is impossible to rise in this world from one caste to another, though it is quite possible to lose caste altogether by the breach of a caste law. Chief among these laws are those that lay down that no one may marry outside his caste or eat food cooked by any one of a lower caste.

For a man to be out-casted it is not necessary that his offence should be intentional. He may, for instance, eat with a man of a lower caste under a misapprehension, but he is just as much polluted as if he acted deliberately.

When a man is out-casted it is said that '*huqqa pānī band hogaya*'—i.e. 'the pipe and water are refused him', or, in other words, his fellow-castemen will not smoke or drink with him. This is merely the symbol of something much more far-reaching which amounts to social ostracism. So long as the slur remains no one will admit the outcast (I should like to spell it 'out-caste') or his family to social intercourse of any kind, one result being that he or, if he is already married, his children will be debarred from marriage.

Fortunately for the outcast the sentence is not irrevocable, but if he repents he can usually regain his position by nothing more drastic than the payment of a fine or the provision of a feast for the local members of the caste.

Nor are caste laws in some respects interpreted now as strictly as in the past, some elasticity having been introduced in order to suit the conditions of modern life. Brahmins and Bhangis, for instance, sit in the same railway-carriage, men of all castes drink from the same tap, children of the depressed classes are being gradually admitted to the general schools, while crossing the



*kāla pānī* (the 'black water', as the sea is called), is no longer considered a serious offence.

And in spite of the humiliations and handicaps which the system means to so many, most Hindus are satisfied with their lot or are at any rate resigned to it, though members of the depressed classes are beginning to revolt.

The reason why there is not more widespread revolt against this tyranny is to be found in the comforting doctrine of the transmigration of souls, according to which a man gradually rises in caste during successive lives provided that he has lived worthy of promotion. So everyone hopes to be born a Brahmin sooner or later; and if there is any delay in the process he has only himself to blame.

Moreover even from the point of view of the present life the caste system is not wholly bad.

For although there are many quarrels inside each caste, still on the whole the members of each caste are a great brotherhood, ready to help each other in much the same way as friendly societies in England; and this probably is the reason why no system of poor relief is necessary in India except at the time of special calamities, such as earthquake or famine.

Nor is caste entirely a force for separation of one class from another. In a way it binds Hindu society together, for even apart from the doctrine of elevation to a higher caste in a future life all castes are recognized as parts of one system and the members of each caste have duties to perform to society as a whole.

Finally the sanctity attaching to the distinction between high and low affords India its surest bulwark against the invasion of Communism from Central Asia.

*The Position of Women.* When a European man sets out to explore the actual conditions under which Indian women live he finds his way barred. He is faced by the *purdā* which he may not lift. And without lifting it he may never see the general womanhood of India. He has therefore to glean his information not from direct observation but from the accounts of European women or enlightened Indians, official statistics, admitted customs, and the contents of the sacred books.



About one thing, however, no one with any experience of India can have any doubt, and that is the inferiority of women in Indian eyes.

Listen to what Manu says: "In childhood a female must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband, when her lord is dead to her sons; a woman must never be independent."<sup>1</sup>

Or again: "Though destitute of virtue, or seeking pleasure elsewhere, or devoid of good qualities, yet a husband must be constantly worshipped as a god by a faithful wife."<sup>2</sup>

Or again: "If a wife obeys her husband, she will for that reason alone be exalted to heaven."<sup>3</sup>

Or analyse the character of Sita, the ideal type of Indian woman, as depicted in the great epic, the *Rāmāyana*, and you will find that her claim to pre-eminence among women rests upon her complete subservience to her husband, Rāma.

Similarly Muslim women are relegated to a secondary place by the Koran, though in less extravagant language. "Men", it runs, "are superior to women on account of the qualities with which God hath gifted the one above the other."<sup>4</sup>

Even the British law tacitly recognizes the inferior position of women by treating a wife as her husband's chattel. It is a criminal offence, for instance, to entice another man's wife away, but, if prosecuted, the offender, provided that the husband agrees, may practically buy the woman together with her ornaments and so escape all punishment.

From the very beginning a sharp distinction is drawn between the sexes. It is a Hindu's sacred duty to beget a son, and it is the son's hand that must light his funeral pyre and speed him to salvation. Great then are the rejoicings when a son is born. Far otherwise is it with a daughter: her coming is not enjoined by any divine command, nor has the father need of any rite from her. On the contrary she imposes an irksome duty upon himself. He is bound to arrange for her marriage, and that involves the payment of a dowry which he may be ill able to afford; but the penalty for failure is deep disgrace. So no signs of welcome greet

<sup>1</sup> "Laws of Manu," V, 148.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., V, 154.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., V, 155.

<sup>4</sup> *The Koran* (Rodwell's translation), page 415.

the infant girl's arrival: on the contrary the poor father receives condolences.

In ancient times the father made no bones about the matter, but if a daughter was particularly unwanted he would have her despatched at birth. Under British rule such direct methods have gone out of fashion. But neglect can kill as well as force. Statistics can tell a story. There are 122,172,000 Hindu boys and men in India, and only 116,426,000 girls and women.

Among Muslims too the same customs of giving a dowry with the bride prevails; and this is probably the main reason why there are only 36,245,000 Muslim females against 40,099,000 males.

Before they are twelve most Indian girls lose their freedom and retire behind the *pardah*.

What is the origin of *pardah*? And what does it imply?

The institution is in origin purely Muslim, but when the Muslims invaded India, the Hindus, we are told, cunningly adopted the enemy's own device for the protection of their women. At all events the institution is common now to both Muslims and Hindus; and custom has established the practice as surely as any religious sanction could have done, so that it now prevails throughout the greater part of India except among the lowest classes.

A woman, who is in *pardah*, sees no man except her husband and very close relations, and spends nearly all her life within the narrow limits of a few rooms and a stuffy courtyard. On the rare occasions that she leaves the house the vehicle in which she travels must be screened, or if poverty makes her walk, she must, if a Hindu, hide her face behind a *sāri*, or if a Muslim, cover herself from crown to foot with a *burka* which has no opening except two slits before her eyes.

And what are the consequences? We have no exact gauge with which to measure them. But we know enough to condemn the system utterly. We know that the physique of *pardah nashin* women is deplorably low, and that tuberculosis takes a heavy toll of them. We know that their education is neglected—at the census of 1931 only 2.9 per cent of females were recorded as literate, compared with 15.6 per cent of males—and that their mentality is warped and cramped to a pitiable extent. And we know that

they are so isolated that they have no chance of organized co-operation to emancipate themselves.

And yet—the women themselves do not seem to mind. Some enlightened families indeed have shaken themselves free of this constriction, but in most parts of India *purdah* is regarded as the hall-mark of respectability; and I have known educated ladies, who after tasting of the sweets of freedom during college life have buried themselves, apparently voluntarily, within the zenana walls.

Perhaps the surest touchstone of a nation's treatment of its women is its attitude towards marriage. How can India stand that test?

In one respect India is maligned. It is, I believe, popularly imagined that most Indians maintain large harems. Now it is true that by religion, which for this purpose is the same as law, a Hindu may have as many wives as he desires, and a Muslim may have four. Yet in practice it is quite exceptional for a man to have more than one wife at a time. About this there can be no argument, for, as we have seen, there are more men than women.

In other respects it is difficult to find much in India's favour.

Most Indian marriages are arranged not by the future bride and bridegroom but by their parents, whose main criteria for the suitability of a match are, as far as one can see, such material ones as rank and money. When they are betrothed the affianced pair have probably never met before and are usually far too young to know the meaning of married love. Sometimes indeed marriages are arranged before the parties are even born. An Indian marriage is in short a marriage of convenience.

In such circumstances the chances of repellent temperaments finding themselves yoked together must be considerable, yet however mismated the parties may prove to be the wife at any rate has no redress, for Hindu law permits of no divorce, and though a Muslim husband may divorce his wife the reverse does not hold true.

But it is not only the betrothal that is early: the marriage too usually takes place on the earliest possible occasion. According to the census of 1931 nearly two-fifths of the girls of India

#### SOME ASPECTS OF INDIAN SOCIETY

between the ages of ten and fifteen were already married<sup>1</sup>; and many had been married much younger. Think of it! What a spate of misery that must mean! Those who wish to read the details of the dreadful ordeals to which the child-wives have to submit will find them in such books as Miss Katherine Mayo's *Mother India*, or Miss Eleanor Rathbone's *Child Marriage*; but here I will leave them to my reader's imagination.

Perhaps the most disheartening feature in the situation is that facts which appal the European thinker hardly stir the surface of the Indian conscience. True it is that in 1929 the Sarda Act was passed on the initiative of a private person,<sup>2</sup> according to which no girl may be married under fourteen or boy under eighteen; but public opinion has shown itself too strong for the would-be reformer. For so fierce has been the opposition from orthodox Hindus and Muslims alike and so reluctant have been the general public to comply with the formalities requisite for a prosecution that the Act has proved nothing but a dead-letter. A Bill was introduced in February 1938 to tighten up the Act, but what the result will be cannot yet be said.

The Indian bride then starts her married life severely handicapped. What happens afterwards?

How does an Indian husband treat his wife? Perhaps it is rash to generalize at all on a subject involving such a variable factor as human character, especially when our opportunity of observation is so restricted. But we have seen what Manu and the Koran say about the relative position of men and women, and all that we see or hear—little though it be—agrees in conveying the impression that a wife must give way to her husband in everything. We are told, for instance, that an orthodox Hindu woman never mentions her husband's name nor presumes to eat with him: and we notice that on the rare occasions when a Hindu woman goes out with her husband—I refer particularly to women of too low a caste to observe strict *purdah*—she always walks behind him and usually has more than her fair share of burdens.

But treatment by the husband is not the only thing. There is

<sup>1</sup> Out of a total of 19,061,522 such girls 7,269,208 were wives and 185,339 widows.

<sup>2</sup> Diwan Bahadur Harbilas Sarda.

also the husband's family. For you must know that when a Hindu youth marries he does not leave his parents' house but brings his wife there, and she becomes a member of his family. One consequence of this is that she becomes subject to her mother-in-law, and the harshness with which the older woman treats the younger is proverbial.

That many Hindu wives lead an unhappy life is indicated by the disturbing frequency with which reports are received of their throwing themselves down wells. The women indeed who suffer this fate form only an infinitesimal proportion of the total wives of India, but for every one who comes to this fearful pass there must be hundreds in distress.

After marriage childbirth. If you wish to have your feelings harrowed read Miss Mayo's account in *Mother India*. It is possible that the instances quoted there are abnormally bad, and it must also be remembered that some women enjoy the services of doctors or trained midwives, but after making these reservations one is driven to the conclusion that the conditions under which most Hindu women give birth to children are terrible, almost beyond belief. To the pangs of Nature are added darkness, polluted air, filth and discomfort, and the torturing ministrations of a dirty *dai* whose sole qualification is that her family has always done this kind of work.

At childbirth the Muslim wife is not the victim of such barbarous customs as her Hindu sister, but both alike share the agony of bringing forth children before Nature intended it. And the consequences are inherited by the babies of both alike, nearly half of them dying before they reach the age of five.

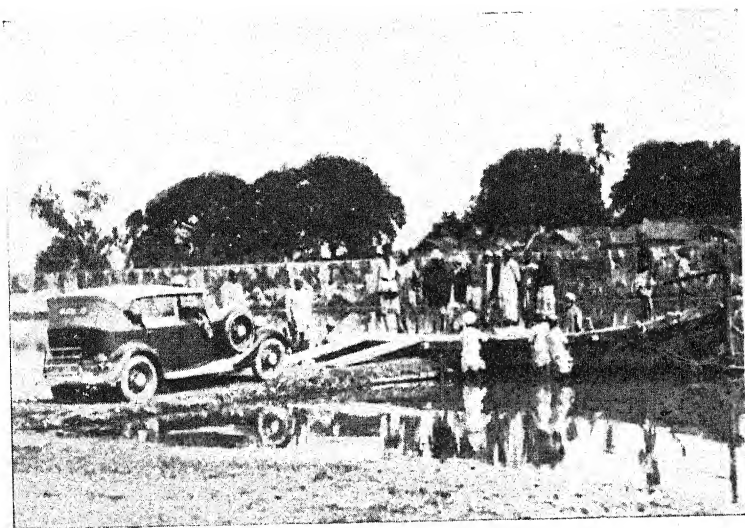
But if the lot of a Hindu wife is often unenviable that of a widow is almost invariably so. She is the object not of pity but of loathing and contempt, her husband's death being attributed to her wickedness in some previous incarnation. Ever after she must wear the mourning of drab clothes and shaven hair and keep aloof from all scenes of joy. And even though her husband died when she was a mere child she may not in most castes ever marry again. The abolition of suttee was not an unmixed blessing.

The Hindu widower suffers no such fate. He may marry as





A DHOBI IN ACTION



A PERILOUS CROSSING





many times as he likes; and this male privilege adds one more to the horrors to which a Hindu girl may be condemned—marriage to a man four or five times her age.

It is a gloomy picture that I have drawn. Can nothing be urged on the other side? Something. At the great Hindu festivals you see crowds of women, presumably of low caste, obviously enjoying themselves. And let us not lose our sense of balance. Full of evils though the system is, it yet leaves room for happiness in many homes, and at its best produces women of such a grace and gentleness as is not often found in the freedom of the West.

And even Manu recognizes that it is advantageous to treat women well. "Women", he says, "must be honoured and adorned by their fathers, brothers, husbands and brothers-in-law, who desire their own welfare. Where women are honoured, there the gods are pleased; but where they are not honoured, no sacred rite yields rewards."<sup>1</sup>

And on that brighter note let me end.

*Religious Festivals.* Religious festivals in India are of far more social importance than in England. In the first place the chief festivals are more national, for not only are they celebrated more widely than any English festival, except Christmas, and more publicly but, if the truth be told, they mean much more to the people as a whole. And next the Hindu festivals at any rate have a special interest for the people as one of the few sources of healthy excitement and entertainment. For it must be remembered that the vast majority of the people live in villages or small towns where cinemas or other amusements in our sense of the word are unknown: and so the great Hindu festivals which seem dull enough to Europeans are eagerly anticipated and enthusiastically celebrated by young and old alike.

The Muslim festivals are more solemn and serious, but nevertheless the interest taken in them is just as keen.

Further the Hindu and Muslim festivals both give their devotees a periodical rest, as Sunday does for Christians.

In addition to the Hindu festivals which are celebrated uni-

<sup>1</sup> "Laws of Manu," op. cit., III, 55, 56.

versally there are an endless number of local festivals, some of which attract large crowds.

The three chief Hindu festivals observed throughout India are the *Holi*, the *Dasēhra*, and the *Diwālī*.

The *Holi* is celebrated in February or March. There are various accounts of its origin, but it undoubtedly has some connexion with birth and spring. The outstanding features of the festival are the throwing of red powder and the burning of a bonfire. People's faces and clothes get covered with the powder, and no one is immune from this attention; and it comes as a shock to the European to find sometimes that what looks like an over-coloured clown is really a most respectable pillar of society. As a variation water is squirted, sometimes coloured and often dirty. The wise European avoids the bazaar on such occasions, for the street urchin is no respecter of persons. Even the cattle get their share of colour, and for weeks afterwards they as well as the people's clothes bear a reminder of the festival. The bonfire recalls in some respects those which sometimes form part of the celebration of Guy Fawkes' Day at Oxford or Cambridge, for the wood is collected from all sorts of sources, and not always with the owner's permission.

The *Dasēhra* is held in September or October, and is the longest and perhaps the most important of all the Hindu festivals. The main features are processions and performances of the *Rāmtila*—that is, the drama of the life of Rāma, a prince of the sacred city, Ayudhia, and probably the most popular incarnation of Vishnu, the god of Preservation. The *Rāmtila* is based on the great epic, the *Rāmāyana*, and represents particularly Rāma's exile and his rescue of his wife Sita from the clutches of Rāwan, the tyrant of Ceylon. Rāma finds a staunch ally in Hanumān, the king of the monkeys, who probably symbolize the aboriginal tribes. The performances take place in the open air before large crowds, and the climax is the burning of a huge wicker figure of Rāwan. The acting is of a very amateurish kind, and anachronisms, such as office chairs, are often admitted, but deficiencies of this nature are more than counterbalanced by the enthusiasm of performers and audience alike.

The *Diwālī* or 'Feast of Lamps' is held in October or Novem-

ber. As the name implies it is customary to illuminate the houses with lamps, consisting of little earthen bowls which contain oil and a floating wick. In spite of the primitive form of lighting the effect is often very striking. The festival is associated with Lakshmi, the goddess of good luck, and it is believed that the best way of propitiating her for the coming year is by gambling all night. The *Diwālī* is a favourite time for Hindu traders to balance their accounts.

Many of the local festivals include as their most important feature a bathe in some sacred water, such as the river Ganges. Specially worthy of mention is the *Māgh Mēla* (that is, the fair of *Māgh*, the Hindu month corresponding to parts of January and February), which takes place at the confluence of the Ganges and Jumna at Allahabad. The number of pilgrims usually runs into six figures, and the most elaborate arrangements have to be made for their transport, health, and safety. Every twelfth year the crowds are still larger when in place of the *Māgh Mēla* the *Kumbh Mēla* (that is, the 'pitcher' fair, the sun being in Aquarius at the time), is celebrated at Allahabad which takes its turn with other sacred cities.

Among the Muslims the most important religious occasions are the *Īd ul Fitr*, the *Bakr Īd*, and the *Muharrum*, but strictly speaking the *Muharrum* is a time for mourning not rejoicing. As the Muslim year consists of twelve lunar months, the solar month, in which the celebrations are held, varies from year to year.

The *Īd ul Fitr* is the greatest day of the Muslim calendar. It marks the breaking of the fast of *Ramzān*, during which month no Muslim may eat or drink during the day. The relief and joy which the Muslims feel are reflected in the gay clothes in which they flock to the mosques.

The *Bakr Īd* ('cow-festival') or *Īd ul Zuba* (the festival of 'sacrifice') commemorates Abraham's sacrifice of his son—Isaac according to the Shias, Ishmael according to the Sunnis. At this festival the Muslims sacrifice goats and cows.

The *Muharrum* (that is, the 'sacred' month) is the occasion of mourning for Hasan and Husain, the sons of Ali, who was the son-in-law and, according to the Shiah, the true successor of Muhammad; though with strange inconsistency many Sunnis,

who form the bulk of the Muslims in India, also take part in the celebration. This culminates with a procession in which wicker *tāzias*, representing tombs of the two martyrs, are carried on men's shoulders to a place known as the *Karbala* after the scene of Husain's death, and buried. As they pass, the members of the procession beat their breasts and call on 'Hasan, Hussain' unceasingly: and it is not uncommon for old men to fall down exhausted with their efforts.

Unfortunately these festivals are not entirely an influence for good. In the administrator's mind they are inevitably associated with communal disputes and riots. But that aspect will be more fittingly discussed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER VIII

### SOME ASPECTS OF INDIAN POLITICS

Relationship between Hindus and Muslims—The Reforms—  
Political Parties

JUST as in the previous chapter I made no attempt to give an exhaustive account of Indian society, so in this one I shall not attempt to give an exhaustive account of Indian politics. My aim is merely to describe three outstanding aspects of the subject:

- (1) the relationship between Hindus and Muslims,
- (2) the reforms,
- (3) political parties.

*The Relationship between Hindus and Muslims.* No force in Indian politics is so permanent or potent as the antagonism between Hindus and Muslims. It began with the entry of the first Muslim army into India nearly a thousand years ago and has outlasted all the changes of dynasties and constitutions.

In a contest which has persisted for so many centuries it might be thought that the numbers on each side must be well-balanced. But that is far from so. Out of a total population of 338,000,000 in the whole of India, excluding Burma, there are 239,000,000 Hindus and only 77,000,000 Muslims.

As might be expected, the distribution of the Muslims is by no means uniform, the southern part of India, owing to its remoteness from the invader's path, having much less than its full share.

Force of arms and strong physique no doubt enabled the Muslims to establish themselves in India, and so long as the Moghul Empire flourished their position as the ruling race helped them to maintain their spiritual independence, but more than two hundred years have passed since the predominance of Muslim military power and yet the Muslims are as far from being assimilated to the Hindus as ever.



How are we to account for this phenomenon of two communities living side by side in the same country for so many years and yet preserving their own identity so distinctly?

To find the answer let us consider what are the differences between the two.

First in respect of the religions they profess. Could two religions present a greater contrast than Hinduism and Islam?

Hinduism includes literally a countless number of gods and godlings, Islam recognizes one God alone: Hindus worship idols, Muslims abominate them: no alien can be admitted to the Hindu fold, but Islam aims at indefinite extension of its dominion and as long as the circumstances permitted, made converts at the point of the sword.

In the last-mentioned Hindu tenet we see why no Muslim, unless he or his ancestors were originally Hindus, can embrace Hinduism even if he desired to make such a stupendous change.

The Muslims indeed made many converts—most of them probably by force—but to convert the whole body of Hindus was far beyond their power.

The differences, however, are not confined to religion in the strict sense of the word: they extend also to the customs and the culture of the two communities.

Hindus burn their dead, Muslims bury them: most Hindus are vegetarians, Muslims eat meat: the Hindu law of marriage and inheritance bears no resemblance to the Muslim one: Hindus favour the use of words akin to Sanskrit, Muslims prefer those of Arabic or Persian origin; Hindus regard India, especially the northern part, as their spiritual home, Muslims look beyond the Himalayas to Afghanistan, Persia, Palestine, and even Turkey.

Even in appearance the difference between the members of the two communities is marked. They button their coats on different sides: they affect different kinds of headgear; and nearly all Muslims wear beards, but most Hindus have merely a moustache.

It is therefore not surprising that the communities have kept distinct.

But they are not only distinct from one another. They also regard each other with a bitterness which the differences I have noted are hardly sufficient to explain.

#### SOME ASPECTS OF INDIAN POLITICS

Perhaps we may find the cause of this partly in the intolerance inherent in Hinduism and Islam alike, partly in the annual religious festivals which fan the passions of their devotees to fever-pitch, but most of all, I think, in the contrasting attitudes of the two communities towards the cow.

The Hindus worship the cow and hold that the killing of a cow is one of the deadly sins.

The Muslims on the other hand not merely kill cows throughout the year for the sake of their meat—that, if done quietly, might be tolerated—but every year at the *Bakr Īd* kill them as a sacrifice, thereby glorying in the deed.

It is true that the sacrifices are not permitted to be made in public. Yet even so they are no secret and cause such resentment among Hindus that the festival rarely passes without the occurrence of a riot somewhere.

The irony of the situation is that Islam does not require its followers to sacrifice a cow but permits the sacrifice of goats instead. Far more goats indeed are sacrificed than cows, but once a household has established its right to sacrifice a cow it never gives it up.

And so long as the Muslims persist in this attitude so long will the bitterness between them and the Hindus remain.

But while the *Bakr Īd* is most fraught with dangerous possibilities other religious festivals also provide plentiful occasions for disturbance.

At the *Muharrum*, for instance, the *tāzias* are always a potential source of trouble. Hindu spectators may perhaps refuse to show respect for them by standing: or the branch of a *pīpal* tree, sacred to the Hindus, may obstruct their passage; or a Hindu boy may throw a brickbat at them out of sheer mischief.

Similarly at the *Dasēhra* there is the danger of Hindu processionists shouting pæans in honour of their gods or playing music in front of mosques and thereby provoking the Muslims to retaliate with showers of missiles.

Every thirty years or so a specially dangerous situation arises when the dates for the *Dasēhra* and *Muharrum* coincide, and in spite of the most elaborate time-tables, there is always a chance that the rival processions may come face to face.

Any of these contingencies may cause a fierce riot, involving many deaths. And when a riot occurs the effects are neither local nor temporary. The whole neighbourhood is stirred, and the heart of every Hindu or Muslim beats in sympathy with his co-religionists: and the bitterness leading to and arising from the riot is aggravated and prolonged by the investigations, the trials, and the punishments that follow, so that long before the wound is healed the time for the next celebration of the festival which gave the occasion for the riot comes round and tears the wound still wider open.

But sometimes the occasion for a communal riot seems to have hardly any connexion with religion at all. This indeed is true of the three most serious outbreaks during the last twenty years—the Moplah riots of 1921, the Cawnpore riots of 1931, and the Bombay riots of 1932.

It may be instructive to give a few details about each of these.

The Moplah<sup>1</sup> riots which broke out in Malabar, in the Madras Presidency, were the outcome of agitation on the part of Non-Co-operators who announced the imminence of *swarāj*. The riots started with a revolt against the Government, but it soon developed into a general attack on the Hindus; and all who fell into the Moplahs' hands were murdered or forcibly converted to Islam, while their temples were desecrated and their houses burned. So serious was the rising that a regular military expedition was required to suppress it. What made this communal outbreak all the more significant was that it coincided with a political alliance between a section of Muslim politicians and the Hindu Non-Co-operators for the purpose of driving the British out of India.

The Cawnpore riots were another instance of the vital antagonism between the Hindus and Muslims proving too much for the superficial alliance between politicians of the two communities. These riots arose out of the execution of a terrorist, Bhagat Singh. The Hindus closed their shops as a protest, but the Muslims refused to do so; and when the Hindus tried to force them fierce fighting broke out, and for several days in spite of the presence of troops the city was given up to massacre, arson, and pillage.

<sup>1</sup> The Moplahs are the descendants of Arabs who arrived by sea in the tenth century A.D.



AN ALFRESCO SHAVE



A SUTTEE SHRINE





SHIKAR ELEPHANTS



BEATERS IN A FOREST



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At Bombay the trouble started out of a trivial incident but it did not end for seven or eight weeks, during which 211 persons were killed and over 2,600 injured.

But apart from open conflicts the two communities are always scheming for their own aggrandizement. The method may take various forms. An attempt, for instance, may be made to take out a *tāzia* higher than in previous years, or to include in the celebration of some festival a procession which was never held before. Or the object may appear more national than religious, as when the Hindus agitate for the substitution of the *Nāgarī* for the Persian script as the official language of the courts.

Mutual distrust too is always present. Every officer, however highly placed, is suspected of favouring his two co-religionists in the matter of appointments; and if there is a trial concerning a communal dispute, the only way of satisfying the parties that they will receive impartial treatment is by arranging for a European to hear the case.

Regrettable as the cleavage is, it is so patent that the Government cannot shut their eyes to it, and it is an elementary principle of Indian administration that the interests of Muslims, where they are in a minority, need special protection. Accordingly arrangements are made for the adequate representation of Muslims in Government offices, in the public services, on benches of magistrates, on public bodies and in the legislatures: and unfortunately it has been found necessary to continue the system under the new Constitution and to allot a certain number of seats in the legislatures to Muslims.

In a way these provisions themselves tend to perpetuate the antagonism which made them necessary, but to withdraw them before the establishment of real harmony between the two communities would lead to inevitable oppression, discontent, and disorder.

Serious as have been the consequences of this dissension in the past, there is a danger that with the weakening of the British element in the control of policy they may prove still more serious in the future.

What, for instance, will happen in the Provincial Governments, which now, apart from the Governor, consist wholly of Indians

elected by one or other of the rival communities? How will the members of these governments behave?

Will they sink their differences for the common good and regard themselves as Indians first and Hindus or Muslims only secondarily? And when there is trouble, will the Minister in charge of the police, or whatever department may happen to be concerned, take an impartial view and not be influenced by his personal predilections?

Or will the Ministers take the narrow point of view? And if so, will the authority of the Governor and his power to intervene on behalf of an oppressed minority be sufficient to keep the Government tolerably united and the people content? Or will the crises that arise over Hindu-Muslim questions be so constant as to split the Government in two?

On the answer to questions such as these depends to a large extent the success or failure of the Reforms. So far, it must be admitted, the democratic Governments have shown no open partiality.

*The Reforms.* The Reforms instituted by the Government of India Act, 1935, were not the first neither are they the final instalment of self-government for India, yet the extent of the advance represented by them amply justified the fanfare with which they were proclaimed.

The title of first instalment may be fairly awarded to the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919. Concessions indeed of a kind had been made to the democratic principle long before then, but these had given the people of India little real power and had led nowhere.

The declared objective of the Reforms of 1919 was 'responsible government', that is to say, government responsible to the people of India with the proviso that India should remain 'an integral part of the British Empire'.

It was not, however, intended that the final objective should be reached at one leap, but it was recognized that the Reforms of 1919 were merely a beginning and it was decided that commissions should be appointed periodically to survey the situation and to consider what further advance, if any, would be justified by the progress already made.

## SOME ASPECTS OF INDIAN POLITICS

It was in consequence of this provision that the Statutory Commission under Sir John Simon visited India in 1928-9 and recommended a further large measure of reform.

But their recommendations did not go nearly far enough to satisfy public opinion in India, and in deference to the strong feelings aroused a series of round-table conferences, at which British and Indian representatives met together, was held in London, from 1930 to 1932, and their recommendations after review by a parliamentary Committee formed the basis of the Government of India Act.

Some of the reforms are embodied in the Act itself and others in the Instruments of Instruction issued by His Majesty to the Governor-General and Governors, but for our present purpose we may ignore this technical distinction.

What is the nature of those reforms?

A description of the details would lie beyond the scope of this book, but a brief reference to the salient features will not be out of place.

In the first place there has been a great advance in the responsibility of the Governments to the people through their elected representatives in the various legislative bodies.

To make this clear, let me sketch the position as it existed before the Act.

The Central Government, except so far as it depended on the legislature to pass the Acts necessary for carrying out its policy, was completely irresponsible. It consisted of the Governor-General in Council, the Governor-General being the same person as the Viceroy but in a different capacity; and the Governor-General when appointing a member of his Council was not required to take into account whether his nominee enjoyed the confidence of the legislature. Any executive resolution which the legislature might pass was of a purely advisory nature and had no binding force on the Government.

In the Provincial Governments the position was different. Ever since the introduction of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms there had been a peculiar form of government, known as 'dyarchy' or 'double government' owing to the fact that the government was partly bureaucratic and partly responsible to the people.

In technical language the Government consisted partly of the Governor in Council and partly of the Governor acting with his Ministers; or to put it in another way, the Provincial Governments in addition to the Governors consisted partly of Executive Councillors and partly of Ministers, the Ministers being responsible to the legislatures but the Executive Councillors not.

The subjects with which the Executive Councillors dealt were known as 'reserved', and included such essential subjects as law and order, while the subjects with which the Ministers dealt were known as 'transferred'.

Resolutions passed by a provincial legislature about reserved subjects did not bind the Government, but those passed about transferred subjects did.

But the responsibility even of Ministers was rather illusory, for a large part of the legislature consisted of officers nominated by the Governor. A Minister could always rely on the solid support of this official bloc, and needed therefore only a small proportion of the votes of the elected members.

All this has now been changed.

In the provinces the government has become completely responsible except for special safeguards invested in the Governor.

This has been brought about by abolishing the distinction between reserved and transferred subjects and replacing Executive Councillors with Ministers responsible to the legislature for all heads of administration, by removing the official bloc from the legislature and by requiring the Governor to appoint as his Ministers those who command a majority in the legislature.

At the centre the government is not completely responsible yet, but a system of dyarchy has been introduced on the analogy of that hitherto prevailing in the provinces, the main subjects reserved being defence and foreign policy.

Another change of great importance is the large extension of the franchise. Under the new Constitution the total electorate in British India, excluding Burma, has been increased from 7,108,000 to 30,138,000, and the number of women voters from 316,000 to 4,255,000; that is to say, the total electorate is more than four times and the female electorate more than thirteen times as great as before. This enormous extension, combined with the changes

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already mentioned has had the effect of transferring political power to the masses, who can now decide from what party the provincial Governments shall be formed.

And lastly must be mentioned the far-reaching principle of federation. Hitherto the Indian States have been entirely separate from British India, the Government of India as such having nothing to do with the ruling princes, who deal direct with the Viceroy as the King-Emperor's representative. The necessity of changing this system if India is to be truly united is obvious when it is pointed out that the Indian States account for almost a quarter of the population and almost a half of the area of the whole of India excluding Burma. The Government of India Act accordingly provides for a federal union of the British Provinces and the Indian States. No state can be compelled to join the federation, but the ruling princes as a whole have declared themselves in favour of the scheme, and in spite of various obstacles it is hoped that gradually all the leading states will come into line.

The suitability of the Reforms has been discussed by politicians of every shade of view. The lips of those, however, with practical experience of the administration of India have been for the most part sealed, and it is difficult to ascertain their general view, but I believe that the vast majority of them are convinced that while there is room for difference of opinion about details, the general principles embodied in the Act are the best that could be conceived to meet the circumstances of the situation.

We may regard the matter from two distinct points of view—the welfare of the Indian people and the interests of Britishers. If the two cannot be reconciled in any respect, the former, it will be conceded, must take the preference: and let us examine that one first.

The greatest changes have taken place in the provincial governments. What have been the general consequences there?

Most people in England who had not studied the Reforms closely would probably reply that the main effect has been to give Indians a greater share in the government of their country. Yet the Act hardly provides for Indianization of the governments or administration at all. Even before the passing of the Act it was the practice that, apart from the Governor, there should be only one



European in each provincial government compared with three or four Indians: and arrangements for the gradual Indianization of the Services had already been made. The supplanting of the European member of each provincial government by an Indian is the only step towards Indianization directly created by the Act.

Further progress in this direction may indeed follow in the not distant future. It would not require much courage, for instance, to prophesy that Indian governors will soon take the place of British ones; and there can be little doubt that in the Services Indians will receive a greater share of the higher posts than in the past.

Nevertheless the essential importance of the Reforms lies in the fact that they have made the system of government not more Indian but more democratic. For if the number of Indians in the provincial governments has been increased only slightly, the type of Indian eligible for appointment has been changed completely: and instead of depending for his appointment on the favour enjoyed by him in official circles, a minister now depends ultimately on the voters of the country for his position.

How will these changes affect the policy of the provincial governments and the general administration?

As regards the policy of the governments, it may be safely asserted that in future partisanship and the desire to capture votes will play a greater part in framing policy, and that efficiency will have to take second place to popularity. That, however, is a feature of government not peculiar to India but common to all democracies.

A more disturbing feature is that each Minister represents a constituency not of Indians in general but of Hindus or Muslims, as the case may be: and this, as we have already seen, is all too likely to aggravate the tension that prevails already.

As regards general administration, the Act itself takes no account of districts or any unit smaller than a province, and the effect of the new régime in the districts will be indirect. The knowledge, however, that the Government are actuated by democratic motives and less likely than in the past to support 'strong' action may make local administrators less vigorous and determined than before.

Some loss of efficiency at any rate may be assumed. Whether

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the loss will be unduly great and whether the price paid for self-government will prove too high is a controversy on which I do not propose to embark.

But to those who maintain that the masses have been sacrificed to the intelligentsia, I would put a few questions. What has been the attitude of the masses themselves? Have they on the whole shown any resentment at the changes embodied in the Reforms either before or after the passing of the Act? Is it not rather true that in most towns an extremist body like the Congress, whose aims go far beyond the degree of independence granted, has for many years received strong support and that even in the villages there has been hardly any sign of spontaneous opposition? And that in the first elections under the new Constitution the Congress party has been markedly successful? In such circumstances was it for us to save the Indian people from their fellow-countrymen?

Others have raised the question whether democracy is a suitable form of government for India at all. As an abstract proposition the question is at least debatable, for excluding the instalments of self-government already granted by ourselves, India has never experienced a democratic government, and at elections the voters have always betrayed a lamentable ignorance of the real issues. On the other hand the mere extension of the franchise may result in a gradual increase of political enlightenment among the masses. But the discussion no longer belongs to the realms of practical politics. In fact it ceased to be after the introduction of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, when it was finally settled that India should have a democratic government.

Others have argued that while democracy must be accepted as the final goal, the pace with which India is moving towards it is far too rapid. In a sense this is true, for by Acts of Parliament India has been given in less than twenty years what it took centuries to evolve in England. But we must recognize the force of circumstances. We were too slow in giving India her first genuine instalment of self-government, with the result that we have now had to go too fast; for with no less could we have remotely satisfied Indian aspirations, and without that no constitution can work.

Let us face then the hard fact. If justice had not persuaded, necessity would have compelled us to do what we have done.

But though the strength of Indian aspirations dictated the introduction of the Reforms, it does not follow that British interests will suffer undue damage.

Trade is the most important consideration, and no one now believes that trade will suffer from the further grant of self-government to India. In pre-Reform days Lancashire learned by bitter experience that for purposes of trade political predominance is of no avail. In fact boycott of British goods was one of the most powerful weapons of the Congress; and the more contented India becomes the more our trade with her is likely to improve.

Nor is there much danger of victimization of British firms in India, for there are safeguards to prevent this.

A certain number of well-paid posts will indeed be lost to individual Britishers, but the loss is unappreciable for the British nation as a whole.

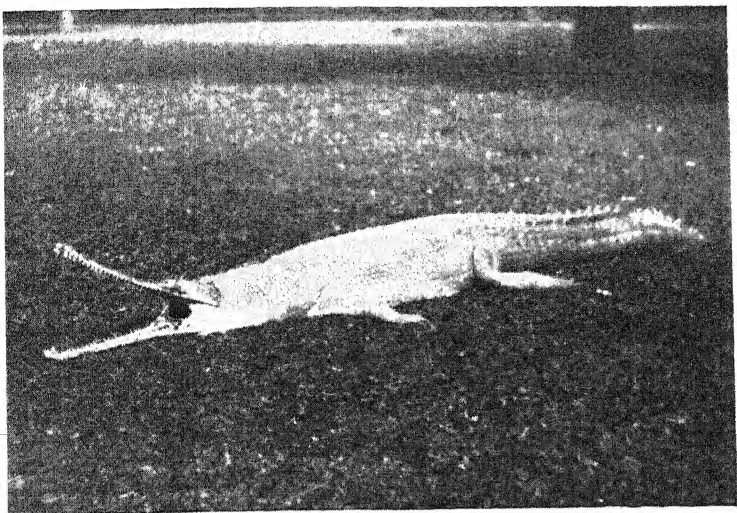
In conclusion let me point out that while the Reforms may not be an ideal solution of the problem of satisfying Indian aspirations and at the same time protecting British interests, none of the critics has propounded any other scheme better fitted to meet the actual facts.

*Political Parties.* Before the introduction of the new Constitution, apart from the division into Hindus and Muslims, there were roughly three political parties in India: the Moderates, the Congress and the Revolutionaries.

All these parties were animated by resentment at the British domination, but they differed as to the degree of independence sought and the methods considered proper for its attainment.

Both the Moderates and the Congress aimed at complete self-government, but while the Moderates expressed their wish to remain within the British Empire and their readiness to work the new Constitution with the reservation that they would agitate for more, the Congressmen announced their intention of breaking away from the Empire and so obstructing the Constitution as to make it unworkable.

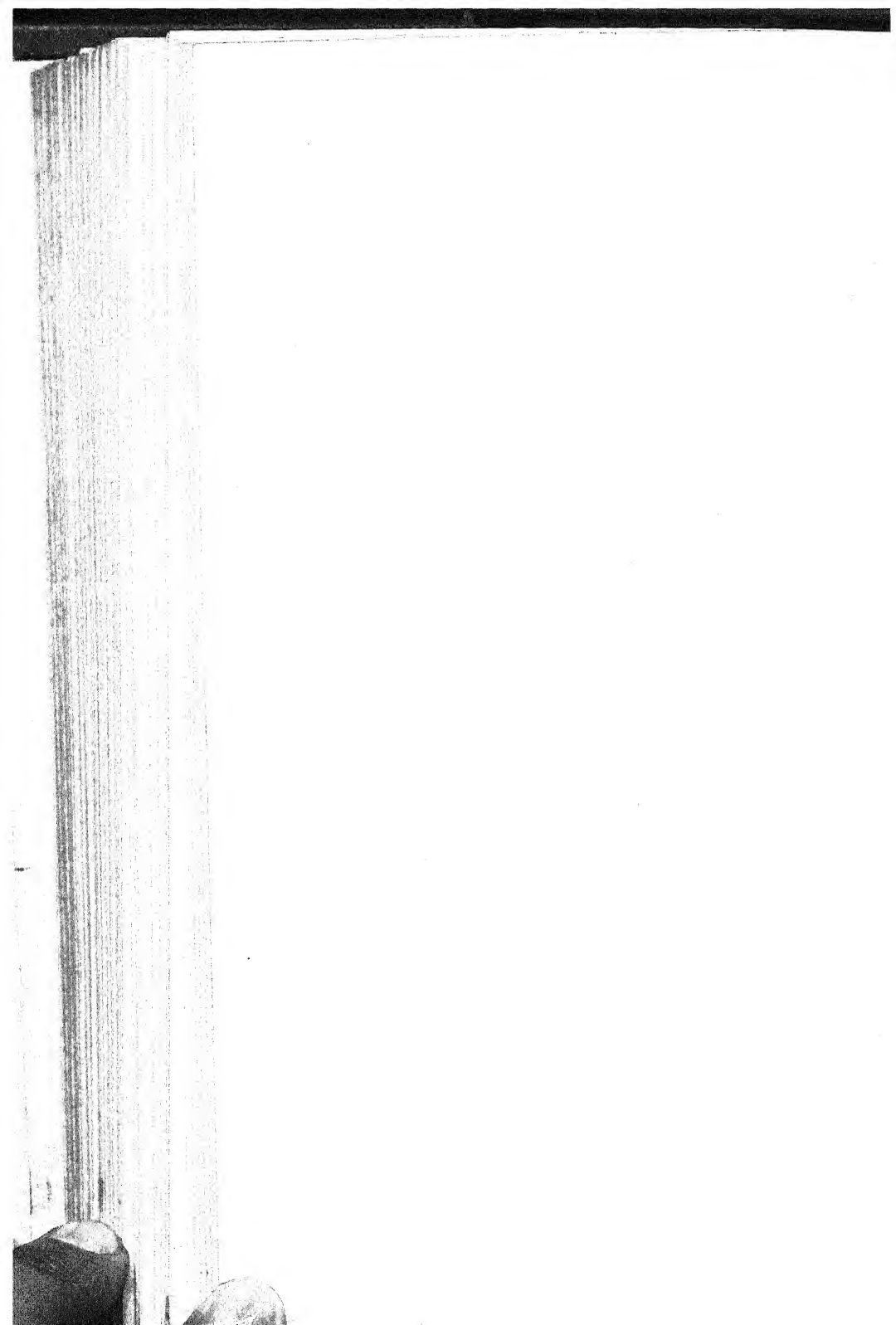
The difference between the Congress and the Revolutionaries was largely one of method. The Congress professed to abhor violence, though their practice often fell short of their profession,



A GHARIYAL SOON AFTER BEING SHOT



A FEW HOURS LATER



while the Revolutionaries openly avowed their belief in the efficacy of the bomb and the revolver.

There was also difference of opinion between the parties as to the form of government desirable. The Moderates professed to desire a full-blown democracy, though what would probably have pleased the politicians of the party most of all would have been a completely Indian bureaucracy. The Revolutionaries on the other hand aimed at establishing a soviet republic—an aim shared by the left wing of the Congress, notably Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

The great advance in independence granted by the new Constitution has profoundly affected the position of these parties. For it has robbed the Revolutionaries of much of their *raison d'être*, and has transformed the Congress, in the provinces at any rate, from enemies into members of the Government.

The main basis, then, of political parties is no longer their attitude towards the British Government but the principles they hold concerning India's internal administration.

From this point of view the Congress party may be regarded as having a bias in two directions—socialism and Hinduism; and to correct these biases two parties now face them in opposition. On the one hand are the adherents of the old Moderate party, particularly the zemindars, who are fearful of communistic changes; and on the other are the bulk of the Muslims, who would far prefer British to Hindu raj.

For the present the predominance of the Congress is assured, claiming, as it does, the allegiance of the Hindu masses. The only hope for the other parties lies in the possibility of a split between the left wing and the main body of the Congress, but of that there is at present little sign.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE INDIAN MENTALITY

Conservatism—Leisureliness—Love of *Izzat*—Politeness—Religiosity—Subtlety—An Eye to the Main Chance—*Kachcha* Methods—Eyewash—Credulity—Fear of Responsibility—Unpracticality—Eloquence—Family Devotion—Patience—Hospitality

I SHALL not attempt in this chapter the invidious task of comparing the Indian and British characters, or passing a moral judgment on the Indian temperament. My only aim will be to present what seem some salient features of the outlook of the Indian people.

*Conservatism.* In India custom has a force unknown in Europe, and in social matters it is often the final argument against which all the efforts of the reformer beat in vain.

If you ask people why they do not send their girls to school, or why they keep their women in *purdah*, or why they marry their daughters so young, or spend so much on a wedding, or do anything in a particular way, they will reply that it is or is not their custom as the case may be, and that is the end of it.

Similarly if an Indian accepts a tip, he calls it a *dastūrī*—that is, something customary—and thereby removes all ground for objection.

In matters of industry, agriculture, and transport too the Indian still clings to the age-old methods. For though factories have sprung up, especially in the large cities, and modern agricultural implements have been introduced here and there, and motor-vehicles are daily increasing, yet these are still the exception, and the primitive methods continue to hold their own. Everywhere you may see the potter and spinner turning their wheels, and the weaver laboriously crossing warp with woof, the peasant patiently

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scratching the soil and the cartman driving his bullocks in the same old way as their forbears scores of centuries ago.

Sometimes this has its amusing side. I remember once how we introduced our sweeper to a vacuum cleaner. He regarded it with as much favour as a cannibal chief would an electrical cooker and, after a feeble pretence to humour the mem-sahib's whim, he abandoned the effort, and, openly rejecting the new-fangled invention, reverted to his ancestral broom of twigs.

The strength of public opinion on the side of custom is fully recognized by the authorities, and over and over again the question, 'What is the custom?' provides the solution to the problem.

If, for instance, there is a dispute as to whether Muslims should sacrifice cows at the *Bakr Īd* at a particular place, or whether a religious procession should go along a certain route or should be held at all, the first thing that the authorities have to ascertain is the custom; and if the decision is challenged, it will not be on the ground that the principle is at fault but that the custom alleged does not exist in fact.

I remember on one occasion when the Muslims demanded that a Hindu procession should be required to stop its music when passing a mosque, the Hindus eventually agreed to this condition provided that it were not taken as a precedent. Unless some such provision as this had been made the Hindus would have had to submit for ever to this restriction, for the Muslims would have ever afterwards pointed to the arrangement of the previous year or years as constituting the custom.

Similarly when the collector has to appoint a *lambardār* or to decide whether each co-sharer in a *mabāl* is entitled to collect his own rents, or whether a tenant may cut down a tree or use a grazing ground, or has to settle any other agrarian question which is not definitely determined by law, the first thing he does is to inquire into the custom: and for that purpose a special statement, enunciating the customs of each village, is prepared at every settlement and incorporated in the papers maintained by the *patwārī*.

India indeed is the home of conservatism where the old and the right are often synonymous.

Well, it may be said, there is one sphere at any rate in which India is not conservative—in politics her pace is breathless, and it is only the British who are holding her back from overstepping a stage of democracy which itself is far in advance of her political experience. But a little examination will show that this attitude is no real exception to the rule. For the British raj is far too recent an incident in the life of the Indian people to claim the sanctity of custom; and the ideal, which really fires the Indian politician, is not democracy but the removal of British influence—in other words, a return in a most vital aspect to the conditions of the days of old.

*Leisureliness.* It you analyse what is meant by the Indian's leisureliness, you will find that it really contains two ingredients; first, a low estimate of the value of time, and secondly a habit of taking things easily, though the two are often inextricably mixed.

So little does the average Indian value time that a timepiece is not considered a necessity in his house, and few villagers at any rate possess any kind of instrument for telling the time. The villager's clock is the sun pure and simple, without any device such as a dial: and if you ask him what time anything happened, he will reply so many watches after sunrise or before sunset, or at noon, or at some other point of the sun's progress. At night the notation is still more indefinite, for the only fixed points are the beginning and the end, sunset and sunrise, and when the villager speaks of the middle of the night, it is hardly more than guess-work, for he hardly observes the stars at all and is quite unable to tell the time by them.

The lawyer is ever ready to exploit this little weakness of the villager about the estimate of time, and his cross-examination often produces the most glaring contradictions, though nobody knows better than the lawyer himself how little such contradictions mean.

But whether he has a watch or not, the Indian is habitually unpunctual, so that no one accustomed to India would dream of arriving punctually at an Indian show, for he would merely waste his time: and similarly at an official function Indians are invariably invited half an hour or so before the time they are really wanted.

Whenever therefore a European receives an invitation to a function, he will always ascertain whether the time given is European or Hindustani. Indians themselves are well aware of the difference between British and Indian standards, and in recognition of this not infrequently invite their British and Indian guests for different times.

Sometimes indeed the Indian's unpunctuality seems due not to mere carelessness but to deliberate intention. For while in Europe punctuality is said to be the virtue of kings, in India the reverse is regarded as a more fitting attribute, and to keep others waiting is a recognized way of emphasizing one's own importance. I remember in my young days attending a function at which an eminent ruling chief was expected. He must have been about two hours late, but no one, not even the district officer, seemed the slightest put out at this. I, with less experience, was distinctly astonished at the equanimity with which this assertion of superiority was accepted.

Occasionally, however, the contrast between the British and Indian ideas about time cannot be smoothed over so easily. Once, I remember, the head of a province who was invited to a wedding had to wait so long for the arrival of the bridegroom's procession that he felt his dignity required that he should leave.

But if the Indian by his unpunctuality shows scant regard for the time of others, he is equally prodigal of his own time, and is prepared to spend an unlimited amount of it on anything which interests him, irrespective of its importance according to European standards. At an ordinary committee meeting hours are often spent on the discussion of petty details, and at public meetings speakers discharge torrents of eloquence on the slightest provocation.

And for slow deliberateness I know nothing to beat an Indian dramatic performance. Plays, I believe, often last literally the whole night. I cannot vouch for this, as I never stayed beyond midnight, but at the time of my departure the play, as a rule, seemed to have hardly got into its stride.

And the time that it takes to extract an answer from an Indian office or get a thing done by an Indian official would make Whitehall green with envy. Moreover just as unpunctuality increases

with the rank of the person, so the higher the status of an office, the more deliberate is its working; and for the Government of India to send a reply as promptly as a mere district office would be deemed scarcely consonant with its august dignity.

But this refusal to be hurried is not confined to any class or sphere. Everywhere the same spirit prevails, though it may vary in degree.

Long hours at low pressure are preferred by the Indian workman to shorter hours at higher pressure, and the nominal hours of work outside the scheduled factories would horrify the British trade-unionist. As, for instance, you approach a road-gang, you might imagine that the dinner-hour had sounded or a lightning strike had been declared until, like the prince's kiss on the sleeping beauty's lips, the noise of your car produces such a magical change in the scene that, as you pass, each man has scarcely time to spare a glance to see whether you are a sahib interested in road repairs, only to relapse, however, as soon as you are out of sight, into his previous state of coma.

In the same way your private servants prefer little work and low pay to hard work and higher pay. That is the fundamental reason why every European has to maintain such a host of servants. Caste indeed plays some part in the matter, but for a Muslim servant no job in the house is taboo except that of sweeper. And so a score of servants are kept where half a dozen would suffice.

When you go Eastwards then, leave behind all your old standards of work and time, for you can no more hustle the Indian than change the colour of his skin.

*Love of Izzat.* I have tried in vain to discover an expressive English equivalent for *izzat*. To translate it by 'honour' would be ambiguous, for the connotation of *izzat* is purely objective, referring, as it does, not to any quality of a man's character but to the respect shown him by others. Thus if A. were to strike B. in public without provocation, the European would say that A. had acted dishonourably, but among Indians the man, whose *izzat* would suffer, would be B. Perhaps the nearest translation would be 'social esteem', but that would fail to bring out the

outward appearance implied by *izzat*. The man who keeps his *izzat* bright is the one who cuts a dash and makes a fine show before his fellow-men. The love of *izzat* indeed is a kind of pride and is one of the strongest motives for determining the Indian aristocrat's conduct and behaviour.

This love of display takes a multitude of forms. One of the commonest, as we have seen, is the carrying of arms and the maintenance of armed retainers. Men of high rank will keep scores or even hundreds of weapons and strongly resist any attempt to cut down the number, not because they can make use of so many but because they fear that any reduction would lessen their prestige in the eyes of the world.

Another recognized method of enhancing one's *izzat* is by maintaining social intercourse with distinguished people. You may either visit the great man or, better still, invite him to your house. If you are very distinguished yourself, you may even secure a Governor, but most have to be content with smaller fish than that. Many indeed are glad enough to get even a district officer. On the same principle cards of invitation to official functions are carefully treasured and brought out in time of need as proof of the invitee's respectability.

A great opportunity for making a splash occurs at social functions such as weddings: and on such occasions the host must lavish money without stint or his *izzat* will suffer irretrievably. Multitudes of guests must be fed and amused, fireworks and music provided and presents given. The guests on their part will wear their finest clothes and any fortunate enough to possess an elephant or other magnificent means of transport will parade it for all to see.

But the greatest occasion for the assertion of one's own importance is a *darbar* which may be held for any area from a single district to a whole province. Many of the *darbāris* will shine in resplendent attire, but the *izzat* of each will depend not so much on the grandeur of his clothes as the number of the seat allotted to him. How proud each one evidently feels as he looks down on those beneath him, while even the very last has the satisfaction of knowing that he is one of the select few entitled to attend a *darbar* at all. Precedence is awarded with the utmost strictness on the basis of an official list; and woe befall the man who, however



unintentionally, denies a *darbārī* his rightful place! He will have made an enemy for life.

For a permanent advance in *izzat* nothing can exceed the inclusion of one's name in the list of honours, for that is the kind of honour with which *izzat* is specially concerned. Twice a year besides the comparatively short list of British titles conferred by the King-Emperor there appears a voluminous list of Indian titles conferred by the Viceroy. There is a regular gradation, ranging from the comparatively lowly Rai or Khan Sahib to the illustrious Raja or Nawab Bahadur. The first thing to do is to get a footing on the ladder. But some aspirants are not content with starting at the bottom rung; and I remember once how a gentleman, for whom I had secured the title of Rai Sahib, refused it after publication to my dismay on the ground that he should have become a Rai Bahadur straightaway. This kind of honour, however, will disappear if the Congress have their way.

Sometimes the honour takes the form of an increase in the number of guns included in a ruling chief's salute; and there is a well-known story of how one ingenious chief added a gun in an unconventional manner by timing his arrival at the railway station so as to secure the benefit of the midday gun.

Another coveted distinction on account of the prestige it brings is an honorary magistracy, and here too there is a regular gradation, from third to first class, and from membership of a bench to sitting in solitary state. Until recently indeed the office was often regarded as an honourable sinecure, and men, who were scarcely literate, were thought fit to be appointed; but as far as *izzat* is concerned this system too is on the Congress's black-list.

Just as an Indian exults in the enhancement of his *izzat* so is he crushed by its debasement. No one is more sensitive to disgrace; and when, for instance, a magistrate, as he often does, receives a complaint that a man has been beaten by his enemy with shoes, he must not treat it as a petty matter because he can see no mark of injury, for the wound which that mean article of wear can inflict on a man's self-respect smarts far more than any injury that can be done to his person by an honourable *lāṭhī*. *Izzat* indeed is the Indian's most vulnerable point, and never does he



VILLAGE MOTHERS



A CROWD AT A VILLAGE FAIR



require such tactful handling as when he makes the bitter announcement, "My *izzat* has been lowered".

*Politeness.* The Indian is polite to a fault. In fact he prefers politeness to truth. He tells you what he thinks you would like to hear rather than the actual fact. He considers it better to flatter than enlighten. If you shoot at a crocodile and miss it by yards your *chaprāsī* tells you that you hit it or only just missed it: if you ask a member of the audience later whether the people understood the speech you made in halting Urdu he will reply "Perfectly", though a little cross-examination will reveal that even your informant's comprehension falls considerably short of that high standard; if you ask your servant whether breakfast is ready, he will say he has brought it though not a thing is on the table.

As I write this, my feet are resting on a *gond* skin which well exemplifies my meaning. I was invited to a shoot by a Raja. His son was on one elephant and I was on another. Suddenly a *gond* got up, and I fired at it and missed. Before I could let off another shot, a second report rang out and the *gond* fell, shot through the neck. "Bravo!" shouted the Raja's son, who assured me that my second shot had killed the *gond*. I explained that I had never fired a second shot, and somewhat nonplussed, he had to admit that his own rifle had done the trick. However, not to be outdone, he later informed me that my bullet was found in the *gond's* leg, and presented me with the skin on the ground that I had drawn first blood.

Sometimes politeness is so misleading as to become a nuisance. When my wife first came to India her knowledge of Urdu was extremely slender, and even tackling the cook was beyond her powers. So each day I devoted a few precious minutes to acting as interpreter between the two. Then one day I was prevented from performing this duty and the mem-sahib had to deal with the cook herself, when to her amazement she discovered that his English was considerably better than her Urdu. When asked why he had concealed this he replied that sahibs do not like their servants to know English.

There is also a politeness of deed as well as words. Soon after my arrival in India I went with the collector to a Nawab's house

to dinner. The only other person present was a relation of the Nawab's. At the end of dinner four wine-glasses were produced with a darkish liquid in them. The collector tasted his, and, finding it to be unmistakable port, gently taxed the Nawab with drinking wine, a thing which no pious Muslim may do. It then transpired that the glasses of the Nawab and his relation contained nothing more potent than cold coffee.

Another subtle form of politeness consists of calling a place or institution after the name of a person whom it is desired to please. Dotted all over the country you will see markets, streets, parks, clubs, schools and hospitals labelled with the name of some sahib. I remember even a little drinking-trough that was inscribed with the name of an erstwhile district officer.

Sometimes the politeness is short-lived. A club, that I founded, honoured me by assuming my name, but a few years later I heard that it had twice changed its name to do similar honour to my successors.

The names of medals often share the same fate. Whenever you take charge of a district you will find medals in honour of your predecessor or his wife: but before you leave the district these medals will have been quietly discontinued and others commemorating yourself or your wife will have taken their place; and after you have departed, no doubt the same process continues without break.

On occasion the compliments one receives are so fulsome as to embarrass. Has any district officer escaped the ordeal of being told that he is the best officer the district has ever known? And how the blushes would come to our cheeks when we hear the local poet declare in public our more than human attributes, did we not have to listen to the narrative of the still higher virtues which characterize any superior officer who may be present.

Language is a witness to the Indian's ingrained politeness. When you arrive in India, you no longer 'sit' or 'go' or 'come'—you 'deposit your greatness' or 'remove your greatness' or 'bring your greatness', as the case may be. And if you happen to inquire about the ownership of anything from the owner himself, he will reply, "It is your Honour's".

Not that the same degree of politeness extends to all classes



alike. There are two distinct forms of imperative, a request and a command, and the former is reserved for equals or superiors. If you wish, for instance, to tell a *rāis* to bring you something you say "*Laiye*", but if you address a servant, it is merely "*Lao*".

Similarly there are gradations of the equivalent for 'you', the form of an address to a superior being '*buzūr*', to an equal '*āp*' and to an inferior '*tum*'. How many mem-sahibs have mortally offended a *rāis* by calling him '*tum*', the word to which she is accustomed when speaking to her servants!

There is also another side to the picture. Curiously enough, there is no word for 'thanks' in Urdu. You can express thanks by a circumlocution such as "I render thanks to you", or "I am grateful", or "(It's your) kindness", but such expressions are meant for special occasions and there is really no simple way of saying "Thank you" for the common services of every day.

And if the Indian at his best is an adept at politeness, at his worst he is equally adept at abuse, as anyone can testify who has heard a wordy battle between two screeching viragos as they tear the reputation of each other's ancestors to shreds.

*Religiosity.* The Indian, whether Hindu or Muslim, is intensely religious, that is to say he has an absolute belief in his gods or God, as the case may be, and the teachings of his sacred books, punctiliously performs all that his religion requires of him and is always ready to make open profession of the creed to which he owes allegiance. Hinduism and Islam are indeed vital forces, claiming unswerving loyalty from their adherents and uniting them against all outsiders. Witness the enthusiasm of the Hindus as they flock to see the annual celebration of Rāma's exploits, or the patience with which the pilgrims endure the hardships of travel in the burning heat or on ice-clad mountains, or the frenzy of the Muslims as they beat their breasts and call upon Hasan and Hussain at the *Muharrum*. In respect of devotion at any rate the Christian has much to learn from the Hindu and the Muslim.

Akin to the Hindu's religious faith is his reverence for asceticism. The Hindu scriptures require that a Brahmin should spend his closing years in meditation and self-effacement, and it is



no uncommon thing for men, who have lived busy lives and occupied high posts, to withdraw from the world in the evening of their life.

The custom, however, is not confined to Hindus. A Muslim friend of mine, whom I first knew as a fine shot and keen rider and full of the *joie de vivre*, was discovered by me twenty years later sitting at the feet of his *pir* and giving up his whole time to matters of religion.

But let not my reader run away with the idea that all Indians are saints. A man may be a perfectly good Hindu and yet fall far short of the European's standard of ethics, for Hinduism and morality have little to do with each other, the gods themselves setting a deplorably low example. Hinduism indeed requires little more than the performance of certain ceremonies and the keeping of certain rules: and a Hindu's duty towards his gods consists mainly of presenting offerings, while his duty towards his neighbour hardly goes beyond the observance of rules of caste. Nor does the Koran demand much morality; and the chief sign of a good Muslim is the regular saying of his prayers at the times prescribed for them.

Moreover much is done in the name of religion that is not in fact religious. Myriads of *sādhūs* walk about the land professing the strictest forms of asceticism. Yet the vast majority are merely beggars, and, with their paraphernalia of dust and ashes, matted hair and nakedness, spiked beds and other instruments of torture, as much frauds as the 'blind' or 'crippled' beggars whom we know in England. Some of them are worse, and can only be described as criminals in disguise, a favourite trick of the fraternity being to administer *dhātūra* to a chance acquaintance preparatory to robbing him.

And what of the yogis, whose lofty and untrammelled minds rise (we are told in England) above the impediments of matter? Another Eastern myth, I fear. Though, as a class, less parasitic than the common *sādhū*, yet even the best of them divide their time between the performance of fantastic exercises and the spinning of empty ideas out of minds which scorn to know the facts of life.

And need I say that those famous tricks of the rope and mango

owe nothing to supernatural powers? For the rope-trick has never been witnessed by the eye of man, and the mango-trick is one that the least skilled of conjurers can perform.

Often, too, religion degenerates into sheer superstition, as when a building is marked with symbols to ward off the evil eye, or cows and monkeys are revered as sacred, or the astrologer is asked to frame a horoscope or name a lucky day.

Nor does intense religious devotion exclude all room for materialism. As you walk in the streets and listen to the conversation of the passers-by the topic more often than not is no more spiritual than annas and rupees. And if you wish to see avarice at its grossest visit the holy Hindu cities and watch the Brahmin guides vying with each other in fleecing the unwary pilgrims.

*Subtlety.* There is a strain of subtlety in the Indian's mind. He loves to do a thing indirectly rather than in the straightforward way, and he really despises the man who does not. When he calls a man '*sīdha*' (which means, literally, 'straight' or 'right'), that is an euphemism for 'simpleton'. His restless brain is for ever seeking exercise, whether in intrigue with fortunes and perhaps lives at issue, or in petty haggling between shopkeeper and customer over an anna or a rupee. The game fascinates him whatever may be the stake.

*An Eye to the Main Chance.* Not far removed from this 'subtlety' is another quality, for which the kindest expression that I can find is the heading to this paragraph. To describe this weakness as corruption would often be unfair, for the consideration demanded or received is frequently merely a perquisite or tip. If the *patwārī* recommends the grant of a loan from the Government to a peasant he considers himself entitled to a small commission; if the police clerk has to take the trouble to write down a complainant's report he naturally expects a little recompense; if the *pēshkār* is to put up a petition before the sahib in a favourable light he is human enough to appreciate some recognition. And so it goes on through the whole of petty officialdom. To try to stamp it out is hopeless: public opinion alone could do it, and public opinion is

in favour of it to the extent that nearly everyone would do the same if he had the chance.

But so long as a gratuity is no more than a small reward for services, for which the recipient is already paid by the Government, there is little harm. Serious objection arises when the gratuity is taken by an official to do or not to do something which he ought not to do or ought to do, as when a district board sub-overseer passes a road-contractor's non-existent *kankar*, or a sub-inspector of police takes no action against a guilty man—in other words, when the gratuity becomes a bribe. Even judicial officers are not free from the taint; as was made manifest not so long ago when a Chief Justice found it necessary to institute a regular campaign against the black-sheep of the provincial Service. And that the assertion of the prevalence of corruption is not a mere British libel is demonstrated by the action of the Congress Government in the United Provinces, who have already appointed an anti-corruption officer and set up a committee of inquiry into the evil. But though bribe-taking is prevalent beyond a doubt, its extent cannot be gauged with accuracy, for if the bribe-giver gets what he has paid for there is usually no one to tell the tale.

*Kachcha Methods.* Perhaps no words have to do more duty in official parlance in India than those two blessed but contrary ones, *pukka* and *kachcha*. They have a multitude of meanings, but, generally speaking 'pukka' means anything that is thorough and well thought out, while 'kachcha' denotes anything that is slipshod and careless. Whether British methods are as *pukka* as they claim is for others to judge, but that the Indian's methods are *kachcha* there is no doubt. He ties up harness with string, he leaves cars to seize and guns to rust for want of oil, and even his best work is rarely free from flaws. 'Follow the line of least resistance' is the Indian's slogan: and if you seek for an excuse you will find it in the climate.

*Eyewash.* India is a land of inspections and reports, so the people, who are inspected and send reports, produce what is expected of them. If the civil surgeon expresses the opinion that there are too many deaths from smallpox, the *chaukidār* will see to

it that next time the deaths will be attributed to some other disease: if the superintendent of police is displeased at the number of burglaries reported at a police-station the station officer will arrange for a reduction next year; if the district magistrate, after due notice, inspects a town with the dirtiest of reputations he will find those streets at any rate along which he is intended to go swept and garnished.

I remember on one occasion the inspection of a women's hospital was included in the Governor's programme. I had visited the place without warning a month or so before and found not a single patient there, but when the great man entered the ward, he found every bed occupied, each with a history of the case at the head. As soon as he had gone, the 'patients' returned to the homes from which they had been paid to come.

*Credulity.* The ordinary Indian is ready to believe anything, regardless alike of sense or physical laws, and the most embarrassing rumours often get abroad and are checked with the utmost difficulty.

When the census was first introduced and visits were made from house to house, there was a widespread belief that this was a device on the part of a malicious government to spread the plague.

During the Great War the wildest rumours gained credence. A German warship was said to have made its way up the Jumna as far as Muttra, where under the collector's orders it was arrested by the *tahsildār*; while a shooting star gave birth to a circumstantial story about a German aeroplane—occupant and all.

Still more miraculous stories were circulated about Gandhi in the days when he was a mahatma. Once, it was said, he raised a man from the dead, while at another time he was translated invisibly from one place to another in defiance of all the laws of time and space.

Was ever soil more fertile for agitators' lies and politicians' promises?

*Fear of Responsibility.* I hesitated to mention this, wondering whether it was merely an official *cliché*, but after mature consideration I do believe that, though there are numerous exceptions,

this is actually a trait of most Indians. The Indian official makes an excellent subordinate, but he is better at obeying orders than taking the initiative. If he knows for certain what should be done he will probably do it, especially if he has rules to guide him, but he is dreadfully afraid of doing what may be wrong, and a novel situation quite upsets him.

Once I asked an Indian candidate for the Indian Civil Service what he would do if he heard that a riot had broken out, and he replied, "I would wire to the commissioner": and that does, I think, represent the Indian attitude in a caricaturist's sort of way.

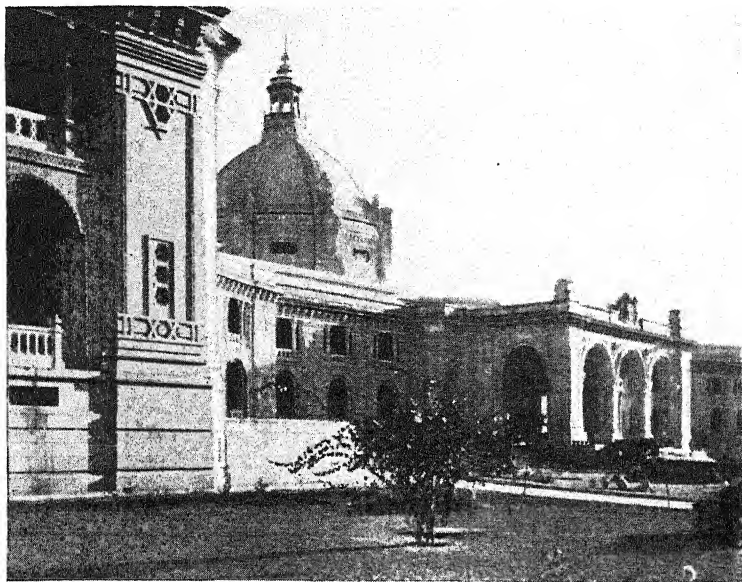
Here is another illustration of what I mean. A police-sentinel allowed a mad dog to pass through my compound, and when I inquired why he did not shoot, he replied, "I received no order".

*Unpracticality.* Common sense is not the Indian's strong point. He likes to have definite rules to follow, and is more concerned with the letter than the spirit, so that 'babuism' has become a byword. Failure to understand the meaning of what he reads shows itself early, for the Indian schoolboy will often learn his text-books off by heart, but he is lost if he is asked any question about them. This was well-illustrated at the examination to which I have referred above. Noticing that one of a candidate's subjects was astronomy, I asked him whether he would be able to point out any stars in the sky, to which he replied, "No, but I could show them on the map".

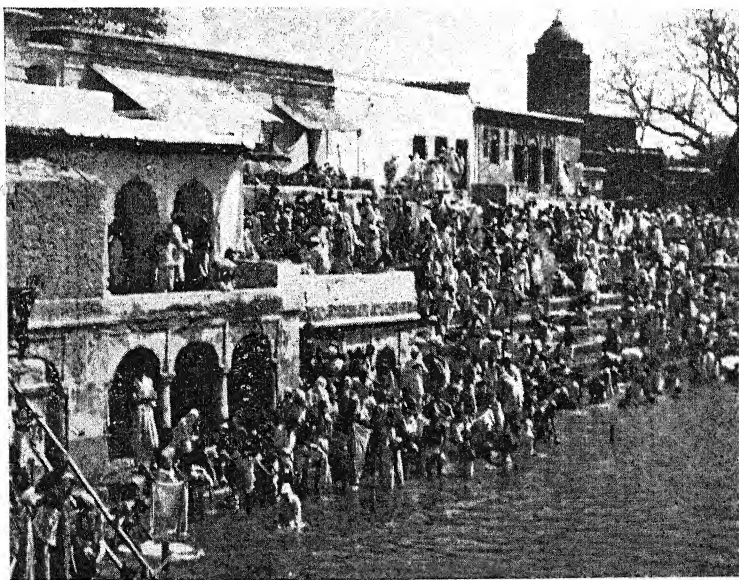
Perhaps the Indian becomes most unpractical of all when he has to deal with accounts. On one occasion I received screeds from my office about what I imagined to be the loss of half an anna. Considering I was making a Solomon-like decision, I affixed a half-anna stamp on the file with the remark that if any one was short of this sum he might take the stamp. This, however, merely horrified the office superintendent, who replied with pained surprise that the problem concerned not half an anna but the accounts for this amount.

*Eloquence.* Though the Indian lacks confidence when he has to face a 'situation', he shows great self-confidence when he has



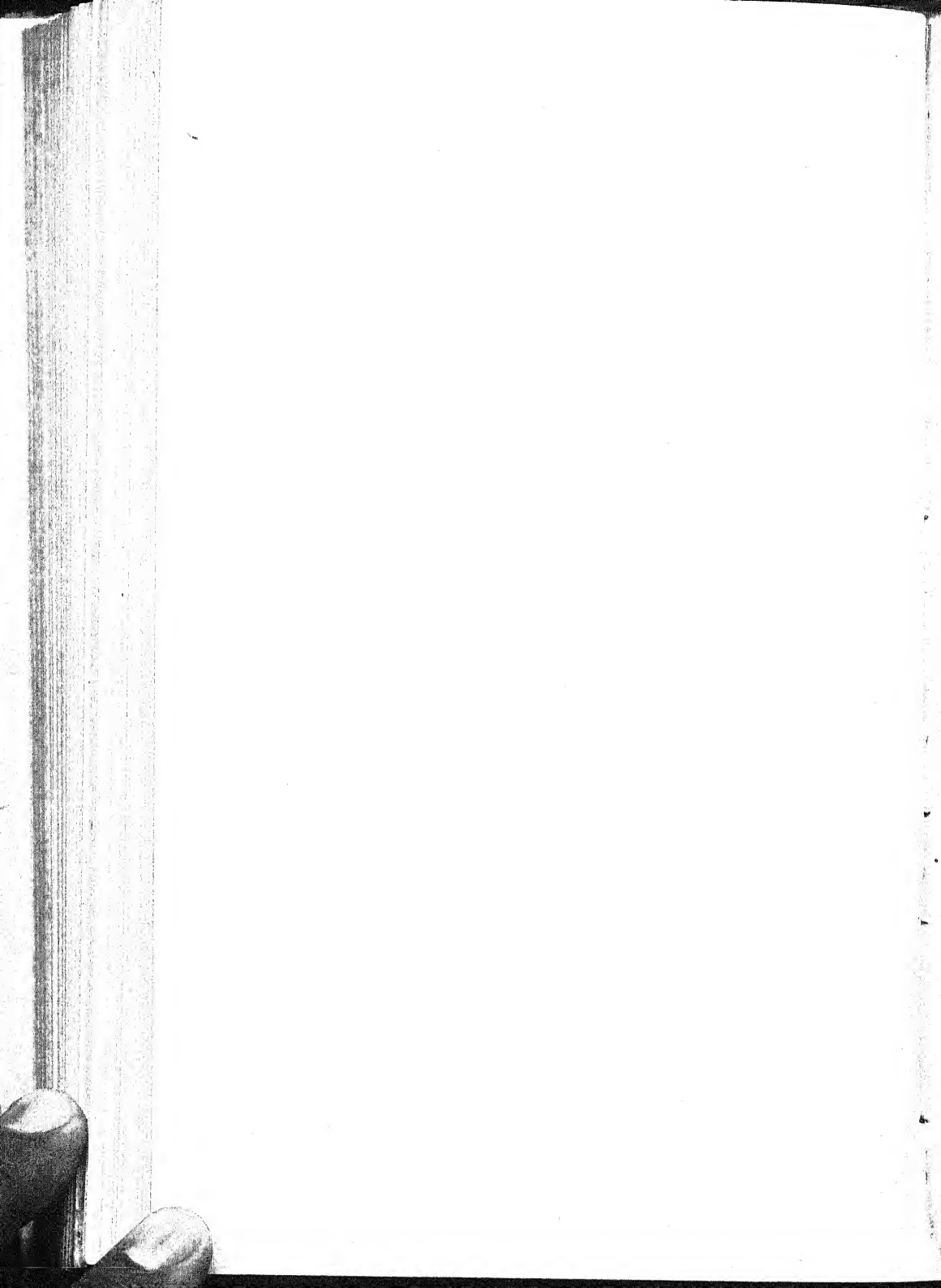


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to face an audience, and, as a rule, is an exceedingly fluent speaker. Words indeed flow so readily that many an orator finds it easier to turn the tap on than off.

*Family Devotion.* Whether as protector or dependant, the Indian is a strong family-man. A father will spend his last anna on educating his sons or marrying his daughters, while a low-paid clerk may have a whole host of poor relations to support, for 'family' has a very broad meaning in India. And this is one of the reasons why you will see no poorthouse in India except for Europeans. One up to the Indian!

*Patience.* The Indian is exceedingly patient and bears his troubles with stoical resignation. Whether he lose his crops or his son, he believes it to be the decree of inevitable fate against which struggling is in vain. "It was written in my forehead," says the Hindu; "Kismet," says the Muslim.

*Hospitality.* Oriental hospitality, unlike many other beliefs, is not a myth. Sometimes it is mere tuft-hunting, as we have seen above, but that is by no means always so. Differences of custom make it difficult for the Indian to offer the European hospitality, but whenever you go to an Indian's house you are made to feel that you are really welcome: and even if you visit him unexpectedly, he will do his best to welcome you just the same, if only by offering the traditional cardamom and producing a chair or a charpoy.

Not but that hospitality, like everything else in India, sometimes takes queer shapes. It is not uncommon for a zemindar to invite you to a meal but to get all the arrangements made by your own servants: and on one occasion I was invited to dinner in my own dining-room in the bungalow where I was staying on tour.

But the spirit of hospitality is seen at its best, because at its sincerest, in the village, where just for kindness' sake the people will produce milk in an earthen bowl and fly-blown fruit in dirty fingers. To refuse would be churlish, but to accept might mean cholera: yet so unthinkable was the former that I used to risk

the latter, till one day I conceived the bright idea of escaping both by adopting the Indian argument that it was not my custom to eat at that hour but accepting the food for consumption at a more convenient time.

And let me close this chapter with the remark that if I have had occasion to criticize the Indian character in some respects it is in no spirit of racial arrogance, nor with the implication that the British character (unlike the Indian) is free from weaknesses and faults. Rather I am well aware that an Indian observer could draw as critical a picture of many of his British friends. Let him try! It would be good for us to see it.

## CHAPTER X

### INDIAN PROBLEMS

Defence and the Maintenance of Internal Order—Indebtedness of the Peasants—Water-supply—Attitude of Zemindars to Tenants—Unemployment—Plague, Cholera and Malaria—Prejudice and Superstition—The Anglo-Indian and Domiciled European

IN previous chapters I have already touched on some of India's problems. This chapter aims at explaining a few more of the most pressing ones. Unfortunately, however, it will prove to be deficient in what, perhaps, is the most important respect of all. Problems require solutions, but for most of the problems of India I can offer no practical solution, partly on account of ingrained prejudices, superstitions and habits of the people, and partly on account of other hard facts.

*Defence and the Maintenance of Internal Order.* I have already referred to certain problems relating to self-government. But that mentioned in the heading of this section requires special mention.

Though defence and the maintenance of internal order are separate functions of the Government, yet they are intimately connected, for each is concerned with the nature of the army to be kept in India in future.

As my reader is probably aware the army in India may be divided roughly into two great classes, the first consisting of the British Army—that is, troops that are wholly British, and are merely stationed in India for a few years—and the second consisting of the Indian Army, in which the rank and file, non-commissioned officers, and holders of the Viceroy's commission are Indian, but most of those holding the King-Emperor's commission are British, though a scheme for the gradual replacing of British by Indian officers is already in force. The British Army,

exclusive of the Royal Air Force, amounts approximately to 54,000 and the Indian troops to 139,000.

The purpose of the army in India is two-fold. First it has to protect the land frontiers, particularly the North-West Frontier, and next it has, in the last resort, to maintain order within the boundaries of India.

How far will India be able herself to perform these primary duties?

For the present the question is beyond the scope of the Reforms, as the previous position has not been materially affected by the Government of India Act; but sooner or later it is bound to arise.

In the first place will the Indian Army in fact be able to dispense with British officers altogether? And if not, how will that affect India's political status?

Till the Great War the official view was that, while Indians of the martial classes are good fighters, they have not the qualities required for officers. That view, as we have seen above, has now been modified to the extent that a start has been made in the Indianization of the officers of the Indian Army: and we need not question the wisdom of that decision.

Even so, as pointed out in the Simon Report,<sup>1</sup> it will take many years for there to be sufficient Indian officers senior enough to command all the regiments of the Indian Army. Meanwhile will the retention of British officers stand in the way of India's autonomy? In other words, can an army commanded by British officers take orders from a Minister elected by and responsible to the Indian people?

There seems no sound objection to their doing so, seeing that they have accepted service in the 'Indian' as distinct from the British Army.

But a much more serious difficulty has to be considered. Assuming that an Indian army commanded entirely by Indian officers will function efficiently enough, will it be capable of fulfilling tasks which the Indian Army has hitherto not been required to perform? Will it, in fact, be able to take over the duties of the British Army?

No one can seriously believe that such a prospect is yet in

<sup>1</sup> Vol. II, para. 197, of the Report.

sight. Not only does the British Army serve to stiffen the Indian forces on the vulnerable North-West Frontier, but, what is still more vital, it is the ultimate power for restoring peace on the all too frequent occasions of Hindu-Muslim conflicts, when Indian troops cannot be used for fear of their favouring one side or the other.

The British Army must then be maintained till India finds relief from the canker to which I have had so often to refer—Hindu-Muslim bitterness.

And so long as the necessity of the British Army remains, all question of complete self-government for India is futile. For how can a country be styled self-governing when it exercises such little control over such an important part of its military forces?

Some politicians have professed to solve the difficulty by asserting that the British Army could be placed under the control of an Indian Minister, but they can hardly mean that seriously.

How could soldiers recruited in Great Britain for Imperial purposes place themselves under a representative of the Indian people? The only civil authority whose commands they can recognize is the Governor-General in his capacity of the King-Emperor's representative and with responsibility to no one but the British Parliament through the Secretary of State for India; and that is what has been substantially laid down in the Government of India Act.

That then is the first problem, though it will arise acutely, not at once but when the next advance of India along the path of self-government comes to be considered—can a completely Indian army be efficient enough to guard the land frontiers of the country and impartial enough to be used against their co-religionists in or outside India? Training and experience may solve the first part of the problem, but the second part brings us once more to that toughest of all nuts, the Hindu-Muslim question, which no amount of legislation or administration can crack.

*Indebtedness of the Peasants.* The next problem is an economic one, the indebtedness of the peasants. At the outset may I warn my reader against accepting estimates of a peasant's average in-



come prepared by political agitators? All such estimates are misleading, not only because the peasant's reward for his labour by no means consists solely of the cash obtained from the sale of his crops, but also because the adequacy of anyone's income cannot be gauged without some reference to the needs which it has to supply.

As far indeed as day-to-day essential needs are concerned the peasant is largely self-sufficient. His food comes mostly from his own fields, he builds and maintains his own house and pays no rent for the site, his fuel is cow-dung and wood, and his light is obtained largely from castor-oil. He has to buy his clothes, but these are few and very simple.

Still in spite of these reservations there can be no doubt that the average peasant fails to make both ends meet. To estimate the extent of his indebtedness is as impossible as to estimate his income, but that a large portion of them are so deeply in debt to the *banya* that they can never hope to escape is unquestionable.

How is it that so many peasants are driven to the necessity of borrowing? To some extent it is necessary, because for the supply of certain periodical essential needs—such as the payment of agricultural rent and the purchase of cattle—the peasant does require hard cash, and his resources are so slender that he often, especially after a succession of poor harvests, finds it impossible to obtain this money except by borrowing.

But the tragedy is that the most potent causes for his falling into debt are within the control of himself and his fellow-countrymen and persist merely because of their refusal to apply the obvious remedies.

Those causes, as we have seen in Chapter I, are smallness of holdings necessitated by the density of the population, the maintenance of unserviceable cattle, extravagance at weddings, and a passion for litigation.

Theoretically the solution of these problems is so easy—limit the population by birth-control, kill off the decrepit animals, spend less on weddings and display, settle disputes out of court. But in practice none of these solutions will work, for they are contrary to customs, beliefs, or habits, as unalterable as the laws of the Medes and Persians.

Unfortunately the peasant's very poverty tends to make him poorer.

For he is too poor to build a barn, or even if he could do that, to wait for payment for his crops, and so he has to sell the produce to the *banya* at harvest-time when the market is glutted and prices are at their lowest.

And the loan which poverty compels him to take from the *banya* itself seals his doom finally: for he will have to pay interest at the rate of 2 or 3 per cent a *month*, or even higher, and liquidation of the debt is almost hopeless.

As a matter of fact the *banya* usually makes no attempt at first to exact full payment by any drastic measure such as sale of the debtor's property, but finds it more profitable to treat his victim as his slave, squeezing out of him continuously all his earnings beyond what he needs to keep body and soul together.

How then can the peasant be saved from the *banya*? How, having fallen into debt, can the peasant be helped out of it instead of being made to sink deeper and deeper?

Various methods have been tried, but none can be said to have done more than mitigate the evil.

Thus the Government lend money to the peasants at reasonable rates of interest, but such advances are hedged with conditions: some security is required and the money is lent only for the supply of agricultural needs, such as the purchase of bullocks or seed, or the construction of a well, or for tiding over a period of distress consequent on an agricultural calamity. Moreover the Government, though agreeing that repayment shall be spread over a considerable period, insist on prompt payment of the instalments and take all steps necessary to ensure this; and this tends to make short-sighted people prefer to borrow from the *banya* whose methods for a time are not so direct.

Another device for procuring a supply of cheap money for the peasant is the establishment of co-operative societies which get advances at reasonable rates from district banks, formed for the purpose. But unfortunately in only a small proportion of villages can sufficient persons be found with sound enough credit to form such societies; and many of the societies which have been formed have failed to show that commercial honesty, without which credit

is impossible and a co-operative society a sham, and after meeting one debt by incurring another have become bankrupt and had to be dissolved.

Another method of dealing with the *banya* has been to strike directly at his rates of interest and limit his profits by law. Various Acts of this kind have been passed, but their compilers seem to have overlooked one important fact. Even the *banya* does play a useful part in society, for if his rates are fantastically high, the peasant's credit is often so lamentably low that no one else would lend him anything on any terms.

On this account the legislation, which has been passed to curb the *banya's* usuriousness, may eventually have the effect not of providing the peasants with money at reasonable rates but of making it impossible for many of them to borrow any money at all. For as the *banya's* rates of interest are reduced, he naturally demands a corresponding increase in the credit of his debtors and is not likely to lend so indiscriminately to all and sundry as in the past.

Thus there are two parts to the problem—how to keep the peasant from falling into debt and how to rescue him when he has. Even if the second part were solved by some drastic measure akin to *novæ tabulæ*, it would be futile without the solution of the first part, for the old process would merely repeat itself and lead soon to the same old result as before. The first-mentioned part of the problem then comes first too in logical order. But the factors are such that the solution depends on that slowest of processes, a change in human nature.

*Water-supply.* When one speaks in England of the water-supply one thinks of water for domestic purposes, such as drinking or washing, but in India there is no general problem about the supply of that kind of water, as it is usually obtained from well which never fail. For all that the water-supply is a far more constant problem in India than in England, the water, however being needed not for the home but for the fields.

The problem is so obvious and has been tackled in so many ways that I hesitated to mention it here. My justification is its supreme importance. For in spite of all that has been done it

still a commonplace that the Indian budget is a gamble on the monsoon.

What has been done already? And what remains to be done?

The indigenous method of irrigation is from wells, supplemented sometimes by tanks; while the Government's contribution to the solution of the problem consists mainly of the provision of canals which draw their water from great rivers such as the Jumna and Ganges—one of the greatest achievements and the most unequivocal blessings of British rule.

Yet the problem, though it must have engaged the attention of the people and their rulers from earliest times, is still far from solved. For wells are insufficient, sometimes for geological reasons but mainly on account of the apathy or poverty of zemindars and tenants: tanks dry up; and the canals, even when developed to the full, can never reach many villages, partly on account of the contours of the country and partly because the rivers, which supply the water, are not inexhaustible.

The fundamental fact that strikes the layman is that even in the driest years far more water in the shape of rain or snow falls from the skies than is required for the irrigation of the whole of India and that most of it is wasted, either sinking into the ground or being carried by rivers to the sea.

Cannot more of this water be conserved?

At present none of it is available for more than current needs except the comparatively small amount which is held up by dams or fills the tanks.

What chances are there of any extension of these two systems?

Dams are so expensive that any considerable extension of them is impracticable at present, and expense also bars any large scheme for the construction of tanks. It should indeed be within the power of well-to-do zemindars and the masses of the cultivators to construct village tanks, the former out of their own capital and the latter with their own hands; but such enterprise, I fear, is not likely to be forthcoming.

Another obvious but important fact is that not only are the wells insufficient but as a rule each well is capable of irrigating only a small area, this being due partly to the limited amount of



water available but specially to the primitive methods of drawing the water by means of bullocks or buffaloes. A way of getting rid of both these difficulties has been devised in the form of what are known as tube-wells which penetrate into deeper water-levels and are fitted with pumps. In the United Provinces particularly the Government have done their best to popularize this type of well, but so far the number is too small to do more than demonstrate what might be done.

On paper, then, the solution is easy—storage of water and the opening of fresh sources beneath the ground—but the practical obstacles are great. Neither the governments nor private persons have capital enough to supply more than a fraction of the needs, and even such persons as have the capital rarely have the enterprise to use it in the most productive way. To protect India then from the danger of drought altogether is beyond the dreams of the most sanguine optimist, but even the slightest improvement in the position would be so much to the good and there is hardly any object on which expenditure is so worth while or so likely to prove a sound investment.

*Attitude of Zemindars to Tenants.* The next problem also concerns agriculturists, but primarily affects the owners rather than the cultivators of land. What attitude will the zemindars in future adopt towards their tenants? On the answer to this question depends the fate of the zemindars and whether they will continue to maintain their position of the most powerful social class in the greater part of India.

Already the reforms seem to have profoundly affected their position. At the time of the introduction of the Reforms the social system in India might fairly have been described as feudalistic; and though the tenants had begun to show increased independence, still, generally speaking, the big zemindars exerted over their tenants an authority akin to that once possessed by the English lords of the manor, and throughout their estates their word was as good as law. Yet at the first elections under the new constitution most of the tenants who voted must have done so in opposition to their zemindars—in no other way could the Congress party have been returned to power.

How are we to account for this upheaval in the peasants' outlook?

To attribute it to childish hopes of the agrarian millennium held out by the Congress would be but a half statement of the truth: the zemindars themselves must accept a large measure of responsibility for the catastrophe which threatens them.

For if the Congress attracted the peasants by their promises, a large proportion of the zemindars repelled them by their unsympathetic treatment. No doubt there are many honourable exceptions to this general statement, yet on the whole it cannot be denied that the zemindars have interested themselves far too little in their tenants' welfare and relied too much on domination and too little on persuasion.

Even now it may not be too late for the zemindars to retrieve the situation and to win the co-operation of their tenants as fellow-agriculturists, but if they persist in their worn-out ideas they will in future have to play a secondary part in Indian life and politics.

That would be a disaster, not merely for the zemindars themselves but for the country as a whole; for they more than anyone have a stake in the country and act as a bulwark against Communism, Republicanism, and all forces of disruption.

Will the zemindars, then, change their attitude with the changed times and adopt the new rôle offered them by destiny? Or will their old habits prove too strong for them and bring down Nemesis upon their heads?

*Unemployment.* Unemployment in India is of quite a different kind from that which is the bane of England and so many other countries. No figures of unemployment are kept in India, but it may be safely asserted that there is no appreciable unemployment among manual workers, and that the post-War slump has not produced in India the abnormal unemployment so prevalent in nearly every civilized country of the world.

The reason is that India, being an agricultural country and having a population which is mostly vegetarian, is far less dependent on international trade than countries which consume only a small proportion of their own produce.

The unemployment problem in India, then, concerns not the



manual workers but the more highly educated classes who aim at clerical, professional and administrative posts.

This is not a problem which has sprung up recently or for which the War can be fairly blamed, but one which has cursed India for many years, though it threatens to get more and more acute.

The reasons for the unemployment among the educated classes are two-fold.

On the one hand the number of graduates manufactured by the universities each year is embarrassingly large and the standard deplorably low, the universities encouraging their students in the belief that a university's function is to give degrees, and that anyone who is admitted to a university and fails to get a degree has a legitimate grievance.

On the other hand the careers open to educated men are strictly limited.

For consider what are known in England as the 'professions'.

The fighting services absorb an almost negligible amount—the Army officers are predominantly British, the Navy is so tiny that one is apt to forget its existence altogether, while the Indian Air Force is only in its infancy.

The medical profession, too, affords few openings for the educated classes, for apart from *bakims* or *vaid*s (whose qualifications are not so much book-learning as ancestral lore) medical work is almost monopolized by a handful of Government servants. Nor would it, as a rule, be worth while for anyone to obtain the qualifications required for what we may call the European school of medicine and set up as a private practitioner, for the villager is too poor to pay lucrative fees, and with his love of custom prefers the methods of the *bakim* or *vaid*, his only reason for going to the public hospital being that treatment there is free.

Nor does the teaching profession, that great stand-by in England, help graduates in India much. High schools, mostly Government ones, employ a certain number, but schools requiring graduates as teachers are few and far between, while the pay in the elementary board schools is too low to attract the most impecunious graduate, being only a pound or so a month with barely any prospects.

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There remains the Bar. That is the profession which every graduate takes up if he can get nothing else. It is fearfully overcrowded, and most of its devotees live a hand-to-mouth existence, but it has this advantage that anyone can practise it so long as he passes the necessary examination, without the necessity of selection by the Government or any other employer.

Next to the Bar the chief absorber of graduates is Government service, and to attain to that position is the ambition of nearly every graduate. Unfortunately the demand for such posts far exceeds the supply, with the result that many a graduate after fruitless years of search for work is forced to the realization that all his family's sacrifices and all his strenuous studies have been in vain and finds himself stranded and disillusioned, too old to start again and too proud to do what he now holds beneath him. He feels that he has been cheated and that society is his enemy; and only a little is required to turn the balance and make him join the ranks of the revolutionaries and anarchists.

Not that the problem of unemployment is confined to graduates. The youth who has passed even the simple examination prescribed as the minimum qualification for a Government clerkship will never rest contented till he has been appointed to that post; but these lower posts are also far too few to meet the huge demand, with the same result of bitterness and disappointment.

How is the problem to be solved?

It might be approached from two points of view. An attempt might be made either to increase the available posts or to reduce the applicants.

As regards the second possibility, the obvious method of reducing the number of graduates would be to raise the standard of the degree, but this would probably prove impracticable, partly because of the vested interests with which it would conflict and partly because of the Indian politician's passion for education or anything that masquerades as such.

Even, however, if the number of graduates were curtailed, there would still remain the problem of finding employment for those who had passed some lower standard of examination.

How can the work available be enlarged?

The first thing that we must realize is that there is not so much

a dearth of work as a dearth of the kind of work which the educated classes think worthy of themselves.

Economically, for instance, there is no reason why the educated classes should not earn at any rate a bare living from agriculture like their less educated brothers and give a lead in introducing improved methods, seed and implements. But on the many occasions when I have made this suggestion to applicants for work it was received nearly always with obvious distaste. And this prejudice against the cultivation of the land by the educated classes except as zemindars, however unreasonable it may be, is too deep-seated for any government to remove.

A greater number too of the educated classes might be absorbed in other manual labour but for the prejudice against such work. To accept, for instance, a post of mechanic, even if merely with a view to training, would be unthinkable for the average Indian graduate.

But apart from the removal of these prejudices, what possibility is there of providing fresh posts for the educated classes?

To judge from the analogy of England, the obvious way is an extension of the very limited industry of the country, for that would provide work not merely for labourers but also for clerical and administrative staff.

In this direction indeed there lies some hope. Why, for instance, should India be flooded with cheap goods, not omitting *kbaddar*, from Japan? Why does not India manufacture all such articles for herself? Labour is as cheap in India as Japan. So what advantage does Japan possess?

I imagine that Japan does possess one advantage, and that is more enterprise.

In India hardly anything is started except on the initiative of the Government. If anything goes wrong in India it is always "Why haven't the Government done this or that?" never "Why haven't the people?" So even in the sphere of industry the people look to the Government to take the lead.

To some extent the Government have given encouragement by protective duties against foreign goods and, in the United Provinces at any rate, by the grant of loans to deserving industrialists, but, even though the people do not play their full part in the

matter, perhaps the Government might do more by way of propaganda and opening of model factories.

The problem then of unemployment among the educated classes, though complicated by certain prejudices, is not so wholly beyond the Government's control as most of India's problems.

*Plague, Cholera, and Malaria.* Diseases are the common heritage of mankind, and the prospect of rendering any race immune from them in the near future is as bright as of eliminating original sin. What justification then is there for selecting certain diseases of India as a special problem?

There are two main grounds for doing so. In the first place the causes of plague, cholera, and malaria and the methods for checking their spread are so well known that control over these diseases is by now more an administrative than a medical matter. And secondly, each of these diseases claims an exceptionally large number of victims, plague and cholera at certain seasons and malaria throughout the year.

Widespread epidemics of smallpox are also frequent, but, though the disease is usually of a more serious nature than in England, the methods of prevention and treatment are much the same, and it is therefore unnecessary to discuss them here.

Plague is nearly always fatal. It was unknown in India till 1897, when it was brought to Bombay by a ship from China. It was not stamped out at the time, and now scores of thousands of Indians die from it every year. For most of the year it lies dormant, but in the cold weather it invariably breaks out somewhere or other, certain places being specially liable to the visitation.

The disease is conveyed by a flea that has lived on a plague-infected rat or squirrel, and on the death of its original host has transferred its attention to man: and a dead squirrel is usually the first sign the people have that plague is in their midst.

The most effective check of the disease is evacuation of the houses so that the infected fleas may die for want of sustenance. The people are now quite ready as a rule to co-operate in this arrangement, but unfortunately a few, instead of camping in a

#### IMPRESSIONS OF AN INDIAN CIVIL SERVANT

neighbouring grove, fly to relatives' houses elsewhere and often carry the infection with them in their bedding.

Inoculation is another recognized method of dealing with the disease, but the immediate effects are often unpleasant, and very few are prepared to submit to it.

It is no good lamenting what ought to have been done in 1897. What can be done now?

The two main directions in which efforts can be made are destruction of the rats and extensive inoculation of the people in those places where plague usually breaks out. But both ways there are almost insuperable difficulties. Even with the co-operation of the people the extermination of rats in even the most limited area would be a most formidable task, and when the people, as is almost invariably the case, are apathetic, difficulty becomes impossibility.

Nor is there any apparent means by which inoculation can be made more popular. Once more we are up against our old enemy—prejudice of the people.

So all that can be done is to be ever on the look-out for the opportunity of pushing the methods already known and to pray that one day research may reveal an effective remedy.

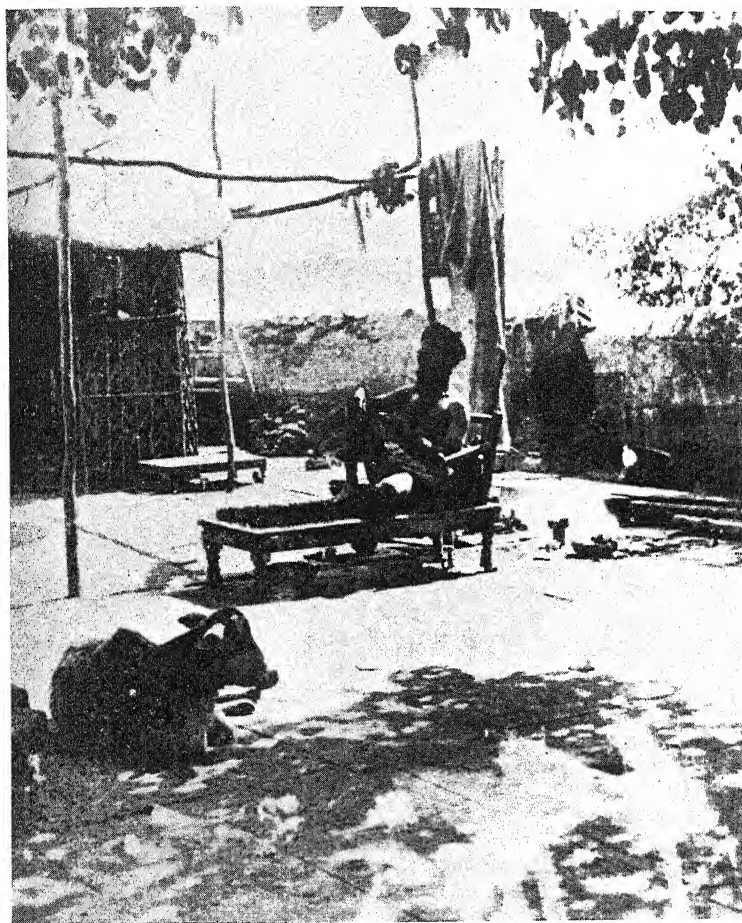
Cholera is hardly less fatal than plague, and claims on an average tens of thousands of victims a year. It usually commences in the rains, the immediate cause being the consumption of over-ripe fruit.

The infection is conveyed by water, and the recognized way of stopping the disease from spreading is to treat the drinking-wells with permanganate of potash and to appoint special men to draw the water so as to protect it from infected vessels.

This usually soon has the desired effect, but owing to red tape there is nearly always a delay of several days between the outbreak of the disease and the imposition of the preventive methods, and that delay often costs several lives.

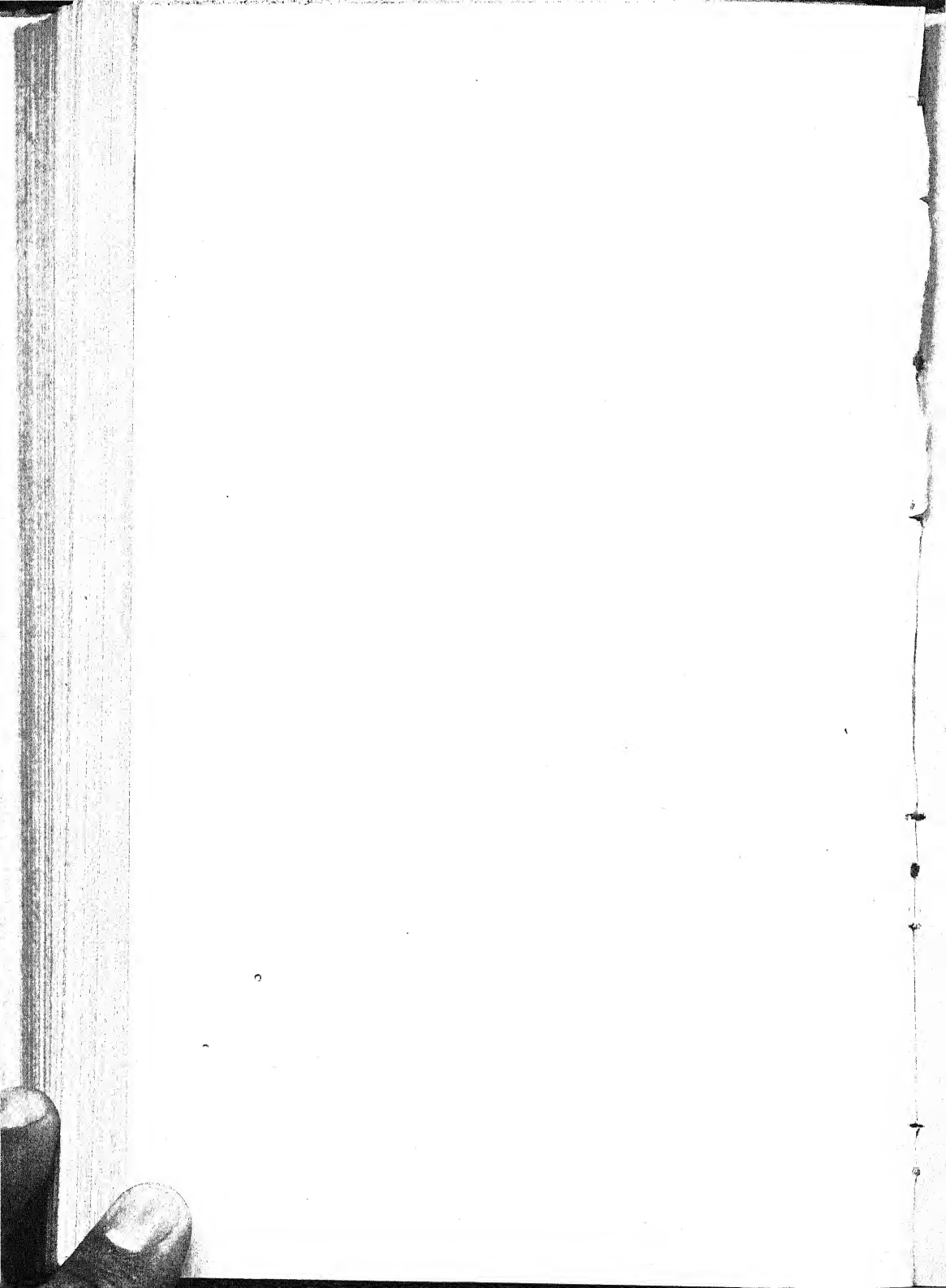
Malaria, however, is a far greater scourge of India than either plague or cholera, not that it is so fatal in individual cases—in fact it is rarely fatal in its first attacks—but because of its universality and the insidious way in which it gradually undermines the constitution and physique of the people as a whole.





A SADHU ON A BED OF SPIKES





The infection is conveyed by a mosquito. Not every mosquito, for if that were so none could hope to escape, but a special kind. It must have three characteristics. It must be of the variety known as anopheles and a female and infected with the disease. What proportion of mosquitoes answer to that description I cannot say, but certainly the proportion is large enough to make it almost certain that anyone in India, who does not take steps to guard against attack, will sooner or later be discovered by one of the fatal kind.

The problem of dealing with malaria might be tackled in three ways—the extermination of the mosquito, protection against mosquito-bites, or treatment of people for the purpose either of rendering them immune from the disease or of curing them.

As far as the masses are concerned the authorities in India have concentrated on the last method, the treatment of people by the administration of quinine. Yet in spite of all that has been claimed for quinine no one can pretend that it is altogether satisfactory either as a preventive or a cure.

The second method, that of protection against bites, is practical only for Europeans and well-to-do Indians, who endeavour to keep off mosquitoes by nets round their beds or wire-meshed doors or by smearing themselves with preparations objectionable to mosquitoes. The defenders have the advantage that the enemy lies inactive during daylight, but he makes up for this by such persistence and cunning from sunset to sunrise that he generally manages to discover some loophole in the defences.

The first mentioned method of dealing with malaria, the extermination of the mosquito, would undoubtedly be the best if it could only be carried out. Yet the task seems so appalling that it has hardly been attempted in India. Could not something, however, be done in this direction? If, as we are told, the mosquito has been exterminated in the Panama Canal, can it not be at any rate seriously attacked in India?

The proper method of attack is well known, namely to suffocate the larvæ by covering the stagnant water where mosquitoes breed with a film of oil.

The great difficulty is that nearly every village has one or more tanks, not to mention countless depressions where water collects

during the rainy season, so that elimination of all possible breeding-places is an unattainable ideal.

On the other hand the problem is simplified by the fact that the mosquito's range of flight is strictly limited—about half a mile is, I believe, the usual estimate—so that preventive measures, if taken within only a restricted area, would not be rendered nugatory by the failure to do so outside that area.

Could not the biggest breeding-places at any rate be sprayed from land or air by some mechanical device? The oil, of course, would have to be selected, or fish and fowl and cattle might object, but that should not be an insuperable obstacle.

"Reduce India's mosquitoes? Impossible!" I can hear from the lips of India's official chorus. Well, so was flying not so long ago. At any rate, whether my suggestion be practicable or not, malaria is a problem which demands solution.

*Prejudice and Superstition.* I have frequently had occasion to refer to particular prejudices and superstitions of the Indian people, but prejudices and superstitions in general, and the mentality which fosters them may be conveniently treated as problems in themselves.

The administrator and the reformer are for ever finding themselves checked by dogmas and beliefs, which are all the more difficult to remove because they are based not on reason but on established custom or blind faith.

Cows and monkeys are sacred, so decrepit cattle must be left to devour the scanty pasture and rob their younger fellows of their strength, arrogant *Brāhminī* bulls may help themselves to the peasant's crops or the greengrocer's wares, and monkeys may commit theft and mischief to their hearts' content, secure in the knowledge that no one will do more than shout at them.

If water is needed for a sacred bathing-pool, it would be a sin to divert it to parched land or withering crops.

Generation by generation child-marriage undermines the Indian physique, but what is that compared with the sanctity of Hindu and Muslim scriptures, and why should the people submit to any secular Act perpetrated by presumptuous heretics?

India's womanhood is stunted in body, mind and spirit within

the confined limits of the *purdah*, but respectability is more than health, enlightenment or character.

Mother India must advance and prosper, but in her family high-caste and low-caste sons must keep their place apart, and sons must lord it over daughters.

Science, when it provides such conveniences as the train and car, may be welcomed, but there are boundaries beyond which it must not step. In spite of all that science may claim does not every Hindu know that an eclipse of a heavenly body is due to its being swallowed by a monster and every Muslim that no theory of stratosphere or space can be true if it conflicts with the axiom of seven heavens?

In the face of such obsessions as these the reformer constantly finds himself helpless to make the people more prosperous and happy, to strengthen their physique, or to enlighten their outlook.

Can anything be done?

Nothing at any rate by the British element in the Government, for any propaganda sponsored by them would be foredoomed to failure. This was demonstrated in the political field before the introduction of the Reforms, and any attempt by Britishers to change religious views in India would merely result in making the people cling to them with more tenacity than ever.

Reform, therefore, must come from the people. Is that practicable?

The optimist may detect a few signs of such a tendency. Attempts have been made to reform Hinduism by such bodies as the *Ārya Samāj*, societies have been formed to promote inter-caste dining, and a private Hindu introduced the Bill for the prevention of child-marriages.

It must, however, be recognized that none of these movements hold out much promise of a saner and healthier attitude. The *Ārya Samāj*, whatever it may have done to purify the Hindu religion, is more anti-Muslim than orthodox Brahmanism itself: the inter-caste societies do little except pass fine resolutions; while the Sarda Act has failed to obtain the co-operation of the people, without which it can have no force.

The rays of hope, then, are slender and have hardly penetrated

anywhere the dark clouds of custom and superstition, and the day when the sun of enlightenment shall break through and shine in full glory cannot yet be even forecasted.

*The Anglo-Indian and Domiciled European.* Some of my readers when they see the heading of this section will rub their eyes and wonder whether they have read aright. Anglo-Indian? He is an English problem, if you like, with his eternal stories of tigers and rajas and *koi-bais*, but what problem does he provide for India beyond the obvious one of getting rid of him?

Let me explain. 'Anglo-Indian' does not mean the same to most people in England as to one who has been nursed on official milk like myself. Some years ago the decree went forth that 'Eurasian', being a distasteful word, should be blotted out of the official vocabulary and 'Anglo-Indian' should take its place. What word was to bear the meaning of the old 'Anglo-Indian' was not divulged. The result has been that the speaker of Indian official jargon is at cross-purposes with the speaker of the King's English. For the purpose of this section then you must understand that 'Anglo-Indian' is polite for 'Eurasian' and means anyone with a mixture of European and Indian blood in his veins, whatever the proportion may be. At the census of 1931 the number of Anglo-Indians recorded was 138,000.

'Domiciled European' also requires some explanation. By this is meant any European, especially a Britisher, who has settled in India with no intention of returning to his original home, or the descendants of such a man. Generally speaking this class consists partly of people who have lost all touch with Britain or have formed strong ties in India and so have no desire to leave, and partly of those who would leave India if they could but cannot afford to do so. Many are old soldiers who have married in India and decided to stay on there, some came out to work in factories, others as tea-planters, and so on.

In this section I shall speak mainly of the Anglo-Indian, but it must be remembered that the domiciled European, when, as is usually the case, he occupies a lowly place, is in much the same position.

As with everything in India, generalization is dangerous, but

while some Anglo-Indians are quite well-off, of most it may be said that they fall between two stools. A member of this community is not accepted as an Indian nor does he desire to be: he would like to be a 'pukka sahib', but British society in India refuses him admittance.

If you wish to see snobbery *in excelsis* you must go to India: and nowhere is this better exemplified than in the attitude of the average Britisher to the Anglo-Indian. Any touch of the 'tar-brush'—to borrow the language of polite society—puts a person clean beyond the pale. Sometimes the touch is so slight that the untrained observer might not notice it at all, but the discerning eye or ear is quick to detect the mark, however slight. Perhaps there is nothing more than the colour of the eyes, or a dark tinge around the fingernails, or the slightest trace of a *chī-chī* accent, but that is enough to damn the owner to the lowest hell.

Whatever then the virtues or the failings of the Anglo-Indian may be, he is just not given a fair chance.

Hitherto, however, the Anglo-Indian has enjoyed two compensations. He has been given special educational facilities, thanks to liberal government grants to the schools provided for his community, and he has received preferential treatment in service on the railways.

Yet even with these advantages there are many Anglo-Indians who are entirely without resources or hope of work, and a constant stream of these unhappy people live a hand-to-mouth existence on the train, travelling up and down and only alighting to beg a ticket for the next big station and enough to keep them till they arrive there. Many are fit for no work except unskilled labour, and even if they could demean themselves to the position of an Indian coolie, the pay would be far too low to maintain any approach to the humblest European standard of living.

Moreover the workless European or Anglo-Indian in India is in far worse plight than his fellow in England: for there is no system of doles for the unemployed or relief for the pauper, but only an inhospitable workhouse here and there.

And in future the Anglo-Indian's state is likely to be still worse. It must be admitted that the Anglo-Indian treats the Indian with



arrogance and contempt, as if to impress him with the superiority which the slightest strain of white blood confers on its possessor. Small wonder, then, that the Indian regards the Anglo-Indian as anathema and is likely to use his increased political power to deprive the Anglo-Indian of such privileges as he has owned up to now.

Anglo-Indian schools may be hard put to it to find the necessary funds, and no longer must Anglo-Indians hope for favour from the railways, which, it must be remembered, are either already State-managed or are likely to become so as soon as the contracts with private companies lapse.

How then can the Anglo-Indians save themselves? It will no longer benefit them to ape as members of the ruling class. Their only hope is to identify themselves with Indians. They must no longer claim superiority over Indians but should be thankful if they can obtain equality.

But that will be difficult for both sides, difficult for the Anglo-Indian to abandon his pride and difficult for the Indian to forgive the past. So difficult will it be that frankly I can see no future for the Anglo-Indian race and no brighter prospect than extinction.

The domiciled European's lot is not so desperate, for if he has not compromised himself by marriage with an Indian or Anglo-Indian woman, he may escape to England, if only he can raise the fare: and in fairness to these stranded people the question of repatriation at the British Government's expense should, I suggest, be considered. It is not so much the present generation that will suffer, for most of them have an assured position, but their descendants, who are likely to find themselves strangers in a strange land, unwanted in India and barred from England.

No reasonable man would suggest that the fate of the Anglo-Indian and domiciled European should stand in the way of Indian self-government. Great changes in fact always spell ruin for some. Still, when all is said and done, the responsibility for the change in India rests with the British people, and it seems not unfair to expect them to do their utmost to alleviate the troubles of those who suffer from the change by subscribing to their schools, or

## INDIAN PROBLEMS

helping them to leave the country, or in any other practicable way.

And here I must end my list of Indian problems, though it does not claim to be exhaustive. The man who can do a little to solve a small part of any of them will have accomplished no mean thing.

## GLOSSARY

IN this Glossary a simplified Hunterian system has been adopted for the transliteration of Hindustani into English spelling.

Vowels, if not marked otherwise, should be taken as short.

The pronunciation of the different vowels and diphthongs and of certain combinations of consonants is approximately as follows:

ă usually like *u* in *but*, but, when final or before *b*, as *a* in *collar*

ā as in *father*

ē as in *hen*

ē as in *prey*

ī as in *it*

ī as *ee* in *fee*

o as in *so*

ū as *oo* in *wood*

ū as *oo* in *woo*

ai as in *aisle*

ao or *au* as *ou* in *foul*

ch as in *church*

th as in *thyme*

*Bahādūr* 'Brave'. As a suffix is a title of honour. In official titles *bahādūr* is superior to 'sahib'; *Rai Bahādūr*, for instance, being superior to *Rai Sāhib*.

*Banya* Popular name for a member of the Vaish caste. A grain-dealer or money-lender.

*Bara dīn* 'Great day', chief festival; *e.g.*, Christmas for Christians, *Īd ul Fitr* for Muslims.

*Barē Sāhib* 'The great Sahib', the 'boss'; *e.g.*, the District Officer in his District.

*Bhisbtī* A man who carries water.

# GLOSSARY

*Capṭān Sāhib* Corruption for 'Captain'; the Superintendent of Police.

*Chabūtra* A platform, especially one in front of a house. May be made of earth or masonry.

*Chaprāsī* A messenger or orderly bearing on the front of his belt a brass *chaprās* (badge), on which is engraved the name of the office or officer he serves.

*Chaukidār* Watchman; a kind of village constable.

*Chhota hāzirī* Anglicized form of *chhotī hāzirī*; literally 'little breakfast'. Brought by a servant in the morning while his master is still in bed, and consisting usually of tea, toast, and fruit.

*Chī chī* Anglo-Indian (*i.e.*, Eurasian) pronunciation of the English language.

*Chik* A kind of blind that can be let down over door-spaces. It is made of loosely-strung horizontal rows of reeds or split bamboos, and is transparent enough for anyone inside a room to see through it outside but prevents anyone outside seeing inside.

*Chipātī* A round flat cake of unleavened bread. In the Indian diet takes the place of the English loaf of bread.

*Chūlha* A Hindu cooking-place, consisting of a three-sided earthen erection.

*Dālī* An open basket containing vegetables, fruit, cakes, sweet-meats or other food: often brought by visitors as a complimentary present.

*Darbārī* A person entitled to a place in a darbar.

*Darī* A cotton carpet; usually with no pattern except a formal border.

*Dhatūra* A poisonous plant.

*Dhobī* Washerman.

*Dhotī* A loin-cloth, especially favoured by Hindus. It consists of a cotton cloth folded round the legs and tucked in at the top. Apart from the *dhotī's* obvious purpose, the slack in front can be knotted to serve as a pocket.

# IMPRESSIONS OF AN INDIAN CIVIL SERVANT

*Ekka* A cheap kind of conveyance. It is drawn by a little pony and is rather like a box on two wheels, the passengers and driver squatting on the top of the 'box', which is usually surmounted with a wooden canopy.

*Gond* A swamp-deer.

*Gūr* Unrefined sugar.

*Hakīm* A Muslim physician of the Greek or Alexandrian school.

*Huzūr* Literally 'the Presence'. Honorific form of address.

*Ibīl* A shallow lake, usually formed by accumulation of rain-water in a clay depression.

*jī* Sir, master. Often used as a suffix; thus *Patwārījī* means *Mr. Patwari*.

*Kachcha* Opposite of 'pukka'; literally 'raw'. Imperfect, inferior, casual. Thus a *kachcha* road is one made of earth, as opposed to a *pukka* one which is metalled.

*Kankar* A kind of nodular limestone used for making roads.

*Kānūngo* A 'revenue' official whose main duty is the supervision of *patwāris*.

*Khaddar* Coarse kind of home-spun cotton cloth, much favoured by Congressmen as a symbol of national industry.

*Kharīf* The crop harvested in the autumn.

*Khēncho* Pull.

*Khidmatgār* Butler

*Koī hai* 'Is anyone there?' The expression used for calling a servant. A nickname for a European who has lived a long time in India.

*Lāla* A Hindu title like the English 'Mr.', especially applied to Vaishes.

*Lambardār* A landlord appointed to pay the land revenue for a whole *mabāl*.

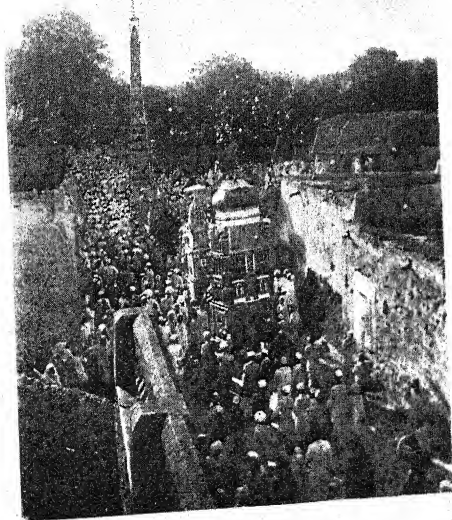
*Lāthī* A bamboo-stick intended for a weapon, and usually about five feet long.

*Log* 'People'. Used as a suffix to form the plural; e.g., '*Sāhib log*' means *Sahibs*.





AN INCIDENT IN THE RAMLILA



A TAZIA PROCESSION AT THE  
MUHARRUM





# GLOSSARY

- Mahāl* An area of agricultural land forming the unit for the purpose of the payment of land revenue.
- Māharāj* 'Great king'. Form of address used to a Brahmin.
- Mālī* Gardener.
- Nāgarī* A cumbrous kind of script akin to Sanskrit.
- Naib* Assistant.
- Naik* A rank in the police and army akin to corporal.
- Nilgai* Literally 'blue cow', but really a kind of antelope.
- Panch* Literally 'five', this being the original number of members of a council. An arbitrator.
- Panchayat* A body of arbitrators. Such bodies have been used among Hindus from time immemorial for settling disputes and have now been officially established in selected villages in the United Provinces.
- Pandit* Form of address for an educated Brahmin, especially a Sanskrit-knowing one.
- Patrī* An earthen track by the side of a metalled road.
- Pattīdār* An owner or part-owner of a *pattī*, which is a division of a *mahāl*.
- Patwārī* An official whose main duty is the preparation and maintenance of the land records of one or more villages.
- Pēshkār* The chief clerk of a court.
- Pī dog* (Pronounced 'pie' dog) colloquial for pariah dog: that is, a scavenger-dog with no private owner. Numbers of these dogs are to be found in every village and town.
- Pipal* A kind of fig-tree held sacred by the Hindus.
- Pir* A Muslim saint or priest.
- Purdab* Anglicized form of *pardab* (*pur* rhyming with *fur*); literally 'curtain'. The system of seclusion observed by Indian women.
- Purdab nashīn* Literally 'curtain-sitting': i.e., a woman who observes *purdab*.
- Rabī* The crop which is harvested in the spring.
- Rai Sāhib* A title for Hindus.

IMPRESSIONS OF AN INDIAN CIVIL SERVANT

- Rais* An Indian of good family.
- Sādhū* A Hindu 'holy' man, usually a wandering mendicant.
- Sāras* A kind of crane.
- Sārī* A kind of mantle worn by Indian women over their head and shoulders and used to cover their face.
- Sarpanch* The head of a *panchayat*.
- Sirkārī* 'Of the Government'. *Sirkārī* chair is a type of chair with arms and cane-seat used in Government offices.
- Siyāba* A register maintained by the *patwārī* showing payments of rent.
- Swarāj* Self-government.
- Tabsil* A sub-division of a district for revenue purposes; the local office of such sub-division.
- Tabsildār* The officer in charge of a *tabsil*.
- Tat* (rhymes with 'cat'); Anglicized form of *tattū*, a pony.
- Tatti* A screen made of khus-khus roots which in the hot weather is placed in the spaces of Western doors and kept damp so as to promote coolness through evaporation.
- Tāzia* A wicker and paper model representing the tombs of Hasan and Hussain, sons of Ali, which the Muslims carry in procession at the *Muharrum*.
- Thānedār* A sub-inspector in charge of a police station.
- Vaid* A physician practising the indigenous Hindu system of medicine.
- Vakīl* A grade of lawyer above a *mukhtār* but below a barrister.

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